

Business-to-business Digital Marketing Strategy

Case Company X

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<p>The need for this thesis arises from the history and current situation of digital marketing in the commissioning company. The digital marketing has been separated marketing function that was rapidly organized when digital transformation begun to enter the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) and infra business fields. Today digital marketing plays a crucial role in the commissioning company but is still seen as difficult and complex.</p> <p>Therefore, the digital marketing strategy is needed which is also the goal of this thesis. The target group of the digital marketing strategy is to business-to-business customers in Finland. The strategy's focus is on the digital marketing channel strategy to find the best possible digital channel mix for different target groups, content, and messages.</p> <p>The theory part focuses on features of business-to-business markets, integrated marketing communication, digital marketing and especially digital marketing in business-to-business markets, and digital marketing strategy models.</p> <p>Current state analysis of digital marketing in commissioning company was conducted to understand the challenges and opportunities. The analysis included each digital marketing channel evaluation and summarizing the findings to SWOT analysis.</p> <p>The strategy was created by using one of the strategy models that were presented in the theory section. The model was slightly adjusted to fit better for the commissioning company's need, culture, market, and target groups. The strategy includes vision, goal, target groups, implementation with timeline and milestones, metrics, and evaluation definitions. The digital marketing channel strategy was created to better understanding of the roles and features of each digital marketing channel that commissioning company is using.</p> <p>The result of the thesis is a digital marketing strategy that gives a roadmap for the commissioning company to improve the digital marketing to business-to-business target groups in their field of business. The roadmap includes steps that are recommended to execute in the first phase and steps that can be implemented in the second phase.</p> <p>Thesis ends with discussion on the results and presents development ideas for further studying.</p>	
Keywords digital marketing, business-to-business marketing, marketing strategy, integrated marketing communications, digital media	

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1 Introduction

Digital devices and access to Internet have become essential parts of our lifestyle. Whenever there is something that needs to be searched, some digital device is nearby and in a short amount of time, the answer has been found. Fast development of digital technology creates pressure for businesses to be found and be available when the customer is searching for the company itself, its products, and services. No matter what day it is or what time it is. Therefore, the businesses need to pay close attention to digital marketing and online visibility. They need to be available when their possible or existing customers are looking for them.

Digital marketing is today very well-known and researched when it is related to consumer marketing, but business-to-business related digital marketing is less covered. But digitalization is coming to business-to-business world too and hence pushing the management and marketers to think about digital marketing as part of the whole marketing concept.

The major change to business-to-business marketing is that it used to be quite traditional marketing activities for example exhibitions, customer events, customer magazines, ads, and direct mailings. Now when digitalization is fast and new technologies for digital marketing are being developed, the business-to-business marketing needs to change to be able to adjust the new technology and take them into use to be available for the customers while considering the features of business-to-business marketing. The business-to-business marketing characteristics are observed more in detailed in chapter 3.1. Digital marketing strengthens and complete the traditional marketing and is a solution for better way to do measurable and profitable marketing (Ginty, Vaccarello & Leake 2012, 2).

I think that in business-to-business segment, digital marketing is still taking baby steps. Some are trying email marketing, some have only one-page website with contact information. Some may have complex website but no other digital marketing activities. Some have focused on search engine optimization but thought that search engine marketing is not valuable and social media is not for business-to-business at all, it is just futile. The digital marketing effort is versatile within the business-to-business segment.

The digital marketing technology has evolved rapidly and continues to do so, which has resulted the numerous digital channels used today. Customers are now able to communicate real time with companies using digital channels and are sharing their experiences in other digital channels. The downloads and searches are not adequate for them. (Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann 2015, 110.)

Many in business world are now looking for information about possible business partners and suppliers not only from search engines or company websites but from social media too. How companies, and its employees as well, are presenting themselves or what people are talking about the company in LinkedIn for example, may have an influence on purchase decision making.

This thesis focuses on business-to-business digital marketing, how the strategy for business-to-business digital marketing is created with focus on digital channel strategy. Thesis studies a commissioning company that operates in business-to-business markets in Finland. The digital change in the commissioning company is also placing a need for this thesis. Digitalization being one of the business strategic focal points means more pressure and expectations from marketing of the commissioning company. New digital services are being developed by the customer service team to improve the availability of commissioning company within the business-to-business customer even outside of office hours. Also new digital tools for design and calculate a suitable system are introduced by product offering management team to the customers to help them to do their own work better and more effectively.

The demands from the market are driving force to develop not only tools and services for the customers but also to improve organisation's own performance. How does company X do marketing and reach the customers? How company X utilizes the digital marketing tools and channels in marketing? And are the channels used the best way and optimal way? The digital marketing has been developed and expanded fast, as well as digital marketing tools and channels has been deployed fast in a short time in the commissioning company. This has led to a point that a whole digital marketing strategy has been neglected due to rapid implementation of the new digital tools. This is the reason for this thesis, to create a digital marketing strategy for the commissioning company.

The structure of the thesis starts with this introduction chapter. The chapter 2 introduces the commissioning company as well as the goals and objectives of the thesis. In addition, the research questions and scope and limitations of the thesis are presented in chapter 2. Theoretical framework with key concepts of business-to-business marketing, integrated marketing communications, digital marketing, strategy models and digital channel strategy are presented in chapter 3. In chapter 4 focuses on the conducted study of digital marketing in commissioning company. Chapter 5 focuses on creating the strategy for business-to-business digital marketing and on digital channel strategy. The discussion about the thesis and some improvement ideas are presented in chapter 6.

2 Organisation, objectives, goals, and limitations

Chapter two focuses on the commissioning company, the company itself, environment and markets as well as an organisation. The goal and objectives of this thesis is presented next in chapter 2.2. In chapter 2.3 the main research questions and sub research questions are discussed. The final topic in this chapter is the scope and limitation of the thesis in chapter 2.4.

2.1 Introduction to commissioning company

The commissioning company X is a Finnish company that is a leading manufacturer of drinking water delivery systems and indoor climate solutions for residential and commercial buildings and infrastructure solutions for municipalities and water utilities. The commissioning company is based in Finland and is listed on Helsinki Nasdaq. There are almost 3800 employees in Europe and North America. The net sales in 2019 was about € 1.1 billion. (Company X 2020a, 3.)

There are two main business groups in the commissioning company, business group A and business group B. Business group A focuses on water maintenance in municipalities and rural areas. Business group A provides solutions for large infrastructure projects such as pressure pipelines for drinking water, attenuation tanks for stormwater or village's wastewater treatment plants. Common customers are municipalities, utilities, industrial companies and infra designers. The newest development in business group A is to offer water monitoring services for water utilities to help monitor the municipal water supply networks about water quality and flow in real time. (Company X 2020b.)

Business group B focuses on residential and commercial building construction and renovation projects supplying solutions for drinking water inside the building, hydronic radiant underfloor heating and cooling, and prefabricated elements for multi-story buildings. Also, local heat distribution pipelines for residential segment are key business area. Developers, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) specifiers and construction agencies are the most common customers for business group B. (Company X 2020b.)

The business markets are divided into two main markets, Europe and North America. Business group A is operating only in the Nordic countries and in Estonia and Poland. Business group B is operating in whole Europe and in North America.

The operation governance model is divided based on the two main markets. The Finnish operations are managed from Europe organisation for both B and A business groups. Though there are centralised organisation for marketing and product development in European level, the country unit has its own sales, finance, marketing, product offering and manufacturing organisations. The country unit is responsible for local markets and local operations.

The Finnish markets are stable when observing the target groups. The most important target groups for commissioning company in Finland are HVAC and infra designers, construction companies, municipalities, water utilities, civil engineering contractors and HVAC installers. In addition, commissioning company has a wide network of distribution partners (wholesalers and retailers) around Finland. Via distributors, commissioning company's products and systems are available for consumers. The biggest HVAC wholesaler chains are the most important customers.

The above-mentioned target groups have different meanings for the company X. HVAC and infra designers are not buying customers, but they have a crucial role in purchase decision making. Designers specify in the plans what kind of solution is needed to make the whole system work flawlessly. Installers and contractors must follow the plans or discuss with designers about alternatives if the suggested is not possible to install. Designer then must change the plans. Installers and contractors are buying either from the wholesalers or directly from the commissioning company depending on the size of the installer or contractor. Wholesalers have a nationwide coverage of point of sales and stocks from where products are available for installers and contractors. Municipalities and water utilities have their own designers, contractors and purchase committee that put out public tenders for infrastructure projects. Municipalities and water utilities are both buying customers.

The local country unit in Finland is representing both business groups. It means that the in Finland are presentative for business group A and B. This differentiate Finland's country unit from rest of the country units of the commissioning company. The customers in Finland are perceiving company X as a one company instead of two as it is a common perception in other Nordic countries where business group A is present.

Company X in Finland has its own marketing team that has a marketing manager and three marketing specialists. One marketing specialist is focusing on business-to-business marketing covering exhibitions, product launches, sales supporting materials, etc. for this target group. One marketing specialist is focusing the same activities towards consumer markets. The third marketing specialist is responsible for all digital marketing activities in

Finland for both target groups. The Finnish marketing team is focusing only on Finnish markets.

As mentioned previously, there are supporting marketing organizations in both business groups. Both supporting marketing organizations are focusing on European markets providing local units guidelines and instructions, brand management, harmonised product/system launch marketing materials as well as are responsible for developing and managing European wide tools and channels such as website. There are responsible persons for developing web applications and web sites, product marketing materials and customer commitment programmes. The role of Finnish marketing team is to localize and adapt the provided material to local markets when needed. The Finnish marketing team also provides feedback from the local market to centralized organisation for existing material but also ideas to improve the current marketing activities or even new ideas to be considered to current marketing portfolio.

The Finnish marketing team covers the whole Finnish market, segments and target groups. Company X's marketing has been mainly business-to-business marketing though there are increasing number of marketing activities done for consumers too. This is due to service concept that was launched several years ago, and new technologies presented recently. Consumer target group and consumer marketing activities by company X are excluded from this thesis.

Marketing activities to business-to-business segment have been traditional marketing activities with exhibitions, brochures, sales presentations, press releases and many ads in different professional magazines. The marketing plan is created together with sales and product offering team to cover both sales targets and goals as well as new product launches or updates but there has not been any certain marketing strategy model used. The main marketing effort for business-to-business segment has been and still is personal sales visits by sales representatives of the commissioning company.

Being one of the market leaders in Finland, company X is well known and trusted brand in its field of business. Brand awareness is the most valuable marketing assets that the company X has. The brand is perceived trustworthy, reliable, domestic and sustainable by the business-to-business customers (Company X's brand and customer satisfaction survey 2019).

The digital marketing has been mainly updating the web sites with product information, new brochure uploads and adding customer magazine's pdf file after it has been printed

and sent it to clientele. Because of the fast development of digital marketing platforms, activities and communication methods in general company X has tried to adapt them rapidly without a clear digital marketing strategy. This has led to disorganised situation with digital marketing delivering the same message to every possible digital channel that the company X has. The governance, updating and managing these channels are time consuming and cannot be done effectively by one marketing specialists. The current state analysis of commissioning company's digital marketing is presented more detailed in chapter 4.

2.2 Goal and objective of the thesis

The goal of this thesis is to improve the digital marketing in business-to-business segment in the commissioning company X. The specific objective for the thesis is to create a digital marketing strategy focusing on channel strategy.

The case study of this thesis focuses the current situation of company X's digital marketing and different digital marketing channels and how company X has used them. The channels are evaluated and analysed from the business-to-business point of view. The findings of the study will form a base from which the digital marketing strategy and channel strategy is developed.

Thesis includes the process of finding and evaluating the right strategy method for digital marketing. After selection of the right strategy method, the digital marketing strategy is created. At the end is an analysis of the digital marketing strategy and an implementation plan to practise.

2.3 The research problem and questions

At the beginning of this study, the challenge was that digital marketing channels were used randomly, delivering the same message via different channels without editing or considering of editing the message to be more suitable for the channel and target group. The main research problem is about a digital marketing strategy in business-to-business segment. What is business-to-business marketing, and specially what is digital marketing in business-to-business segment, what needs to be considered and taken into account when planning and implementing digital marketing in business-to-business segment were studied. The objective of this thesis is to create a digital marketing strategy for company X hence the different digital marketing strategy models and different digital marketing channel strategy models were studied too.

The research questions that this study focuses are:

1. What is business-to-business marketing?
2. What is digital marketing in business-to-business segment?
3. How to effectively create a digital marketing strategy for business-to-business company?
4. What is the current status of the commissioning company X's digital marketing?
5. What are the best digital marketing channels to support the sales to maintain existing customer relationships?

The research questions 1-3 are answered in theoretical insight in chapter 3. Research questions 4-5 focuses on the commissioning company and its digital marketing operations. The aim of these research questions is to create a business-to-business digital marketing strategy focusing on digital marketing channel strategy for the commissioning company. The answer to research question 4 is presented in chapter 4 and research question 5 is answered in chapter 5.

2.4 The scope and limitation of the thesis

The main scope of the thesis is in business-to-business digital marketing and building up a strategy focusing on digital channel strategy. The current perception of the digital marketing situation in company X is quite incoherent and the channels are used randomly hence the need for channel strategy.

The digital marketing strategy for business-to-business segment will include a vision of digital marketing in the commissioning company, the long-term goal of company X's digital marketing, segmentation and target groups, implementation and milestones of the strategy. The focus is on the digital channel strategy presenting the roles of each channel and the objectives of the channel. The traditional marketing activities such as exhibitions, magazines, are excluded from the thesis though many marketing literatures states that these strategies should be aligned.

This thesis focuses on company X's digital marketing activities in Finland. Though the commissioning company is operating in Europe and North America, and many operations are managed from European organisations, the thesis concentrates only in Finland and Finnish markets and customers.

Another limitation of the thesis is the segment. Thesis focuses only business-to-business segment. Company X's most digital marketing activities are currently targeted to consumers, but the thesis and digital marketing strategy is targeted to business-to-business segment and the target groups within the segment. The target group of the thesis are existing business-to-business customers of the commissioning company such as HVAC designers and installers, distributors, municipalities and water utilities and not acquiring new customers.

3 Theory of business-to-business digital marketing strategy

The literature review of the thesis starts with definition of business-to-business marketing in chapter 3.1. It is necessary to first look into what is business-to-business market and how it differs from consumer market which is most familiar. After the market environment is defined, the focus is on specifics on business-to-business marketing in chapters 3.1.2 and 3.1.3. The integrated marketing communication is defined in chapter 3.2 before the last part of the theoretical insight about digital marketing in business-to-business marketing in chapter 3.3 and how to create a digital marketing strategy to a company operating in business-to-business markets in chapter 3.4.

3.1 Business-to-business marketing

In this chapter the business-to-business marketing is defined by comparing it to consumer market and marketing. After which the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) is observed in business-to-business point of view. In addition, the specific features of business-to-business marketing are presented before moving to integrated marketing communication theoretical insight.

3.1.1 Business-to-business market vs. consumer market

Before going any deeper on what is business-to-business marketing, the concept of business-to-business markets and what kind of environment it creates for business-to-business marketing theories are presented first.

There are many differences between business-to-business markets and consumer markets. According to Vitale, Giglierano & Pfoertsch (2011, 9) the differences are in market structure, products, buyer behaviour, buyer-seller relationship expectations, channels, promotion, price, and demand.

In the business-to-business markets the market structure is geographically more focused than consumer markets where customers are widely dispersed. Also, there are less buyers in business-to-business markets than in consumer markets where there are many potential buyers for the same product. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9.)

The product itself can be more technically advanced and tailored in business-to-business markets where in consumer markets the products are more standardized and homoge-

nous. Intangible assets of the product (related services, availability, and delivery opportunities) are important in business-to-business market and in business-to-consumer market they are less important. In business-to-business market, the product is usually bought to produce own product or service, as in business-to-consumer market the product is often bought for personal use. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9.)

Third difference that Vitale et al. mentioned was the buyer behaviour. In business-to-business markets the buyer(s) is often a trained professional that has an organisation support behind him or there is a group of professionals that are managing the purchasing process. While in business-to-consumer market, there is one person who may have an influencer from his/her own family but still managing and making the purchase decision alone. In business-to-business market, the purchase decision can be complex process and may have multiple levels and influencers involved. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9.)

The technical knowhow, experience and quality of the buyer and seller relationship is more important in business-to-business market than in business-to-consumer market. The relationship between buyer and seller can be the result of years of hard work and personal input. During the buying process in business-to-business market, there are lots of information shared from all sides in order to find the best solution. In business-to-consumer market, the buyer is less dependent of the seller's expertise on the subject as well as experience. There hardly is any personal relationship between the buyer and the seller in business-to-consumer market. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9.)

The possible marketing channels in business-to-business markets are few and the marketing message is direct and targeted to certain group of people as in consumer markets there are many possible marketing channels to choose from. The marketing message is usually indirect, and the target group is much larger than in business-to-business markets. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9.)

The common promotion method in business-to-business market is personal selling, two-way communication between the buyer and the seller. In consumer markets, advertising is the common promotion method which means a one-way communication from the seller to the buyer. It is buyer's responsibility to find out more information about the product in consumer market. There might be many companies providing same standardized product and are competing the visibility in consumer market. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9.)

The price of the product can consist of many different parts and even services which means that the price is negotiable in business-to-business markets. As in consumer market, the price is listed and hence predetermined. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9.)

In consumer market, when buyer want certain product, the demand is direct. In business-to-business market, the demand is derived. The B product is wanted for reproducing of a product A. If the product A is not wanted, then the product B is not wanted either. The demand in business-to-business is influenced by others and hence is more volatile than in consumer market where it is more stable. (Vitale et al. 2011, 9)

3.1.2 Marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion)

The four Ps of marketing mix are common despite the market is consumer or business but there still are differences that specify the business-to-business marketing. The four Ps are product, price, place, and promotion. (Vitale et al. 2011, 4)

There is though some criticism that marketing mix would not be suitable for business-to-business markets. According to Ginty, Vaccarello & Leake (2012, 218), the marketing mix does not fit to long sales cycles, relationship-based and brand-driven markets which all are valid in business-to-business markets. Vitale et. al (2011) stated that marketing mix is still valid when some modification is done to the four Ps.

As mentioned in business-to-business market description, the product is often more than just a single product. It may include many kinds of services for example, delivery, installation, maintenance, guarantee and payment plan. In addition, the product is part of the total offering of customer's product range or part of customer's own product. The product can be tailored for the customer's needs and requirements. Hence requiring close cooperation with buyer and seller organisations in order to produce the optimal unique product. (Vitale et al. 2011, 4–5.)

The configuration of the price is more complex in business-to-business markets as in consumer markets. The price might include services, fees, commissions, royalties in addition to costs of producing the product. The price might be even the result of a bidding process. The same product may have different prices to each customer based on their contracts, relationships and experience and level of service. As in consumer market, the price is often fixed list price with a certain discount. (Vitale et al. 2011, 5–6.)

Vitale et al. states that businesses create their locations in order to be closer to customers to provide the right time of delivery for large quantities of products purchased. They also mention that because of the large quantities of products and right delivery times are so essential, it leads to direct relationships between buyer and seller without any intermediaries between. (Vitale et al. 2011, 6.)

The last feature of marketing mix, promotion, is where the business-to-business marketing differs most from consumer marketing. "In business-to-business marketing, personal selling is the most used and effective type of promotion. Personal selling, as a dialogue, allows rapid and accurate feedback to the marketer." (Vitale et al. 2011, 7). Personal selling also allows the seller to tailor the marketing message to customer's needs and requirement (Vitale et al. 2011, 373). Other forms of promotion, such as advertising, sales promotion, and public relations, are not that efficient in business-to-business marketing. Though with public relations, companies can create a thought leadership and deliver brand image and messages, but the impact is long term. (Vitale et al. 2011, 7.)

3.1.3 Other specific features of business-to-business marketing

Beside the marketing mix, there are some specific features that forms business-to-business marketing and differentiate it from consumer marketing. One of the key essentials of business-to-business marketing is the fact that business-to-business marketers need to understand that there is a customer's customer who has their own needs and requirements. The business marketers need to help to create the customer's value in order to sell the product to customer's customer. (Vitale et al. 2011, 4, 12.)

According to Vitale et al. the brand awareness plays as important role in business-to-business marketing as in consumer marketing. They say that consumers are more willing to go to known and trusted brands and that same applies to business marketing too. Though the brands in the same field of business might be different in business markets and in consumer markets. The marketers in business-to-business markets need to build and develop the brand image with long-term plan too. (Vitale et al. 2011, 14.)

Close relationships between the buyer and the seller is the fundamental base for business-to-business market and marketing. To understand the customer's customer, to create a targeted message or to produce a tailored product that fills the customer's need and requirements all need a close relationship and two-way communication between two organisations. As Vitale et al. mention the close relationship "becomes the glue that holds all

the other pieces together to create value by ensuring that the customers' uniqueness is accommodated." (Vitale et al. 2011, 13.)

Most often the buying process in business-to-business markets is long and complex. It also may require a team of persons who are investigating and looking for the best suitable solution for the business's need. This team can be called decision-making committee. Ginty, Vaccarello & Leake presents four member types of decision-making committee, the executive sponsor, the check signers, the influencer, and the change agent. The main contact person for the seller is the change agent. The influencer plays a crucial role in the team by having powerful opinion about the purchase decision. The check signer makes sure that all the quotations include the necessary price information and are comparable. The executive sponsor has the ultimate veto power on the purchase. All these member types are having different point of view on the purchase decision and all these needs to be reached and influenced with different messages during the buying process. (Ginty, Vaccarello & Leake 2012, 30.)

3.2 Integrated marketing communications

To review what is needed with communication and marketing in today's marketing environment with many different digital marketing platforms, the term Integrated Marketing Communications is often referred to manage the message, stakeholders, and the marketing channels. This chapter is studying Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), its definition, approaches and some challenges too. The selected literature reviews are selected from the point of view of this thesis.

Integrated marketing communications has been defined many ways since it first was introduced at the late 1980s and early 1990s (Kliatchko 2008, 133). The concept of IMC has been researched from many different points of views, such as PR, management, branding, relationship management, internal marketing, measurement, to deepen the definition (Kliatchko 2008, 135). Most of the literature today is still stating that the IMC definition is still not determined (Kitchen, Kim & Schultz 2008), instead the concept of IMC is still evolving due to rapid marketing technology development such as social media (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017, 465) and since IMC is still rather new concept within communications (Porcu, Barrio-Garcia & Kitchen 2012, 317).

Bruhn & Schenbelen (2017, 466, 468–470) presents wide variety of different definitions of IMC on both process and conceptual point of view.

The simplest definition of IMC would be by Cvetkov Čikošev who stated that IMC is putting together all marketing activities to achieve the same goal. She also states that IMC is a process where everyone within the company is involved from top management level to operational level to produce an internal and external marketing communication programmes. (Cvetkov Čikošev 2019, 38.)

One of the most popular and academically used definition of IMC is by Kliatchko who stated that “IMC is an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programs.” (Kliatchko 2008, 140.) He also introduced the four pillars of IMC: stakeholders, content, channels, and results. These four pillars form a base from which the IMC programme will be created but they are also the result of the IMC programme due to improvements and changes done by analysing of IMC programme’s activities. (Kliatchko 2008, 145.)

3.2.1 Different approaches of integrated marketing communications

Integrated marketing communication has been stated to have three approaches: the inside-out approach, the outside-in approach and cross-functional approach (Porcu, Barrio-Garcia & Kitchen 2012, 320). The inside-out approach is looking marketing communication from inside the company leaving customer point of view poor or even neglected. The inside-out approach is simply aligning marketing activities together to tell the same message outside the company. The downside of this approach is that IMC is not seen as a strategic management but rather a mean to bring marketing concepts together. (Porcu et al. 2012, 320.)

Bruhn & Schenbelen called the inside-out approach as push communication meaning that the company is ‘pushing’ the message to customers making them a passive receivers, interpreting the message and letting the customers alone to create a perception of the company (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017, 471).

The outside-in approach is a step closer to understand what customer wants and needs, and able to listen the customers feedback too. Here IMC is seen as a mean to influence the targeted customer’s behaviour. IMC is now perceived as a business process though which every marketing activity is planned, created, executed, and finally evaluated. IMC is no longer just for communication but is now involving a business and management. (Porcu et al. 2012, 321–323.)

The second approach, outside-in, Bruhn & Schenbelen called a pull communication. Here the customers are actively searching for information about the company, its products, and services from the channels the customers are deciding to use and when they want to use it. But still, the customer is alone interpreting the message and creating the perception of the company by themselves. (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017, 471.)

The third approach by Porcu et al. is the cross-functional strategic approach where IMC is considered as strategic philosophy where investments and changes of resources are being made to understand the customer needs and wants. In cross-functional approach all organisations within the company, and also the third parties such as advertising agencies, are working together when planning the marketing concepts and managing the customer relationships. This requires that IMC must be agility to adjust possible business environment changes. (Porcu et al. 2012, 323–324.)

Based on these three approaches (inside-out, outside-in and cross-functional strategic approach) Porcu et al. are defining IMC as

the interactive and systematic process of cross-functional planning and optimization of messages to stakeholders with the aim of communicating with coherence and transparency to achieve synergies and encourage profitable relationships in the short, medium and long-term.

Porcu et al. states that when marketers can perform IMC well, IMC is seen as a competitive advantage. (Porcu et al. 2012, 326.)

Bruhn & Schenbelen calls the third approach as customer-centric approach. This new approach is based on the change of marketing technology and rise of social media. Customer-centric approach consist of three elements: relationship, content, and process. IMC concepts must be created in a way that IMC maintain and manage the long-term relationship whether they are internal or external relationships. With the help of relationship orientation, the company can identify and fulfil the customer's expectations, hence maintaining the relationship. (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017, 476.)

Content orientation is all about the story telling. A message that the customer is personally interested in and is told in a way that allures customer to talk about it, share it and even edit it in his own style. Resulting the customer to be part of the company's story telling process. (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017, 477.)

IMC is a process orientated by nature. Executing customer-centric IMC includes many processes between multiple participants and organisations internal and external. Customer-centric IMC enables two-way communication between the company and the customers to create a story. In order to manage these processes, the company is still holding a tight control over its marketing and communications. (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017, 478–479.)

3.2.2 The challenges of integrated marketing communications

There are some identified challenges with IMC that needs to be addressed. Due to increasing number of social media users and platforms, the companies are losing their control on the perception of the company (message, brand, communication, marketing) (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017, 485). The customers are able to create content about companies on their own social media channels and freely talk about the experiences with the company without the company's involvement.

Another challenge of IMC is the concept not being clear enough (Mortimer & Laurie 2017, 513–514). The traditional marketing understanding was focusing on tools and channels that now must be changed to more overall business process view. The concept can also be understood differently depending on the position within the company which might lead the IMC to change the structures and frameworks of the company, hence forming change resistance. (Mortimer & Laurie 2017, 513–514.)

In order to IMC to successfully being implemented, the support from board management level is needed. If this support is missing the IMC is facing serious challenges. With the support from board management level, the possible organisational and cultural changes are more smoothly done. (Mortimer & Laurie 2017, 514.)

The fourth identified challenge for IMC is the collision of the meaning of IMC between the company and its third-party partners such as advertising agency, PR agency and media agency. Without a clear requirement from the company, the agencies might perform the activities based on their own custom and model. But it is required that the company has adapted the IMC approach firstly. (Mortimer & Laurie 2017, 514.)

3.3 Digital marketing and special features for business-to-business markets

Digital marketing can no longer be just one marketing channel among other, it is a big part of integrated marketing communication programmes that cannot be neglected anymore. The definition of digital marketing and digital marketing's special features in business-to-business markets are defined next.

Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick has stated that companies need marketing professionals who are experts in digital marketing if they want to be successful in the future (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 7). They also wanted to bring out some of the downsides of digital marketing too. The fast development of digital marketing technologies and new way of communication as well as the challenge how marketing professionals can determine which digital marketing channels will be the most relevant for their business and customers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 7, 9).

3.3.1 Different definitions of digital marketing

There are many terms for digital marketing such as online marketing, internet marketing, web marketing and different definitions too. First, some of these terms and definitions that are being used in literature are presented. At the end is the definition of what the digital marketing means in this thesis.

The simplest definition of digital marketing was stated by Adam Erhart: "Digital marketing is just a marketing done digitally". "In digital marketing applies the same fundamentals as in traditional marketing, the communication channels are just digital" he continues (Erhart 2019).

Lucy Alexander, a blog writer from Hubspot, wrote that digital marketing covers all marketing activities that is used via digital device or Internet, and businesses attract prospective customers and keep in contact with using digital channels like search engines, email, social media and websites (Alexander 2020).

Many other writers define digital marketing the same. For example, Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019, 9) defines digital marketing as internet and all the technologies that are related to it and together with traditional marketing to reach the marketing goals. They also added that digital marketing is managing the company's online presence whether it is website, social media company page, email, or any other online marketing visibility (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 9).

Deiss & Henneberry (2016) states same that digital marketing is a wide concept that can include everything from a Facebook post to more designed customer path from email to blog post to targeted search engine campaign (Deiss & Henneberry 2016).

Nicklin, Hardy & Meyer are drawing clear boundary between offline, online, and digital marketing. Offline marketing meaning medias that are not online such as printed materials, TV ads and even digital billboards and digital radio. Online marketing is media channels that are using internet. Digital marketing are activities that are using all digital media such as internet, mobile and digital broadcasts, and billboards (Nicklin, Hardy & Meyer 2013).

Nicklin et al. also added to the digital marketing definition that digital marketing must be aligned with offline sales and marketing activities in order to produce real beneficial campaigns and sales visits (Nicklin et al. 2013).

The same statement also gave Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick. It is necessary that digital marketing is integrated with other marketing activities such as print, TV and direct mail formulating multichannel marketing communication. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 10.)

Kingsnorth raises digital marketing higher by stating that digital marketing should be part of every business decision from product development all the way to recruitment process (Kingsnorth 2016, 6).

For this thesis digital marketing will be defined as all the marketing activities performed digitally such as email, advertising (search engine, display and social media), and online presence such as website including search engine optimizing, and social media presence. Though the integration of digital marketing to traditional marketing activities such as print and TV, are very important as a whole marketing strategy, they are excluded from the scope of this thesis.

3.3.2 Business-to-business digital marketing

Digital marketing in business-to-business context is often considered to be lead generation for sales organisation to be contacted and to nurture lead to closed deals. Alexander recommends focusing on appealing website and supporting digital channels to attract prospects and nurture them warm enough to deliver to the sales (Alexander 2020).

Like presented in chapter 3.1.3 the business-to-business buying process might involve many persons with different roles. In addition, there are many implications that they do searches in search engines way before they are ready to make a business decision or even contact the seller's sales representative. Meaning that business-to-business digital marketing is not just about lead generation for sales. Before the purchase decision-making committee can decide to purchase, it is required that the committee is trusting the company which they are going to purchase from. Digital marketing performed correctly is an effective tool to create and nurture the trust (Ginty, Vaccarello & Leake 2012, 6, 9).

Business-to-business digital marketing is not just selling online or transferring business actions from offline to online either, but it also brings value to businesses by reaching decision makers where they spend time. Time that decision makers may not want to share with any possible sales representatives for example time that they spend in LinkedIn or Facebook which might happen out of office hours. (Ginty et al. 2012. 2.)

Business-to-business markets are often small, and the number of customers is few, therefore the direct and targeted message is effective enabling digital marketing tools a great opportunity to reach the right customers with right message (Miller, 2012.) To reach the existing, and also the potential, customers best, a combination of different digital marketing channels and tools with right message has proved to be the most efficient way (Miller, 2012). But it is not just the combination of digital tools and channels but also to align the digital marketing with more traditional marketing such as articles in a printed professional magazine or participating in an exhibition, has the most impact on the whole marketing mix and perception of the company (Ginty et al. 2012, 221).

With business-to-business digital marketing, there are also few pitfalls that needs to be aware of. According to Ginty et al. not all marketing activities performed in digital channels can be tied to sales or revenue sales nor even leads for sales to nurture. Or closed deals can be tracked back to as digital marketing results. Hence sales commenting marketing leads not being too qualified. Therefore, the ideal analytics platform would include both marketing data and sales data together and integrated, but this rarely occurs. (Ginty et al. 2012, 122.)

Miller points out that when talking about business-to-business digital marketing it also needs to be considered how the customers are familiar with online and digital tools. There is no point putting lots of effort on digital marketing if business-to-business customers are still using and looking at traditional marketing channel. But companies need to ready to

launch digital marketing activities when their customers are ready to receive it. (Miller 2012.)

3.4 Digital marketing strategy and different strategy models

In the earlier chapter 3.3, the definition of digital marketing has been introduced and defined what it means in this thesis. This chapter focuses on what digital marketing strategy is and how such a strategy can be formulated. Few models for creating a digital marketing strategy are presented. The chapter begins with a short look at what different strategy definitions are in the business field.

A corporate strategy is needed for business to reach its long-term goals and is a vision that covers the whole business such as product, market, or areas where business will operate. The communication strategy is an operational strategy about how the business will communicate with its different stakeholder groups. A communication strategy is needed to change or maintain a perception of the customers about the company to reach the goals of the communication strategy. (Cornelissen 2017, 109, 112.)

Kingsnorth agrees with Cornelissen and adds a digital marketing point of view to the definition by saying that digital marketing strategy needs to follow the business vision and if needed to change the goals, channels, and messages of the digital marketing strategy to align with the business vision (Kingsnorth. 2016, 39). To digital marketing strategy success, it needs be align with the corporate strategy (Kingsnorth 2016, 30).

Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick state that digital marketing strategy needs to be created to align the online marketing activities together with offline marketing activities so that the businesses goals and objectives are achieved (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 138). In addition, the digital marketing strategy needs to follow the brand, values and express them as instructed (Kingsnorth 2016, 37).

Though digital marketing is seen very important within the companies, it is surprising how small amount of companies have a digital marketing strategy. According to a survey (SmartInsight 2019), 45% of 981 responses answered that their company do not have any kind of digital marketing strategy. 17% of respondents said yes, there is a strategy, but it is a separated from rest of the marketing. Luckily 38% of 981, do have a digital marketing strategy and it is integrated with rest of the marketing strategy and plan. (SmartInsight 2019.)

There are many ways to create a digital marketing strategy. The essential is to find the best strategy model from all the alternative ways that best suits own company (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 160). Also starting the work early, together with other organization within the company and integrating the digital marketing strategy to corporate strategy are important at the beginning (Kingsnorth 2016, 67–68). Kingsnorth also advices to decide the strategy model when starting and keeping with the model during the whole journey (Kingsnorth 2016, 68).

Four digital marketing strategy models are presented next: the generic digital marketing strategy model, the vision-based planning, real-time planning, and sales funnel-based planning model.

The generic digital marketing strategy model aims to tackle the challenges of digital marketing by creating plans how to overcome the possible obstacles. The generic digital marketing model is clear with four steps: setting objectives, defining digital marketing strategy, implementing the plan, and finally measuring, evaluating, and developing the strategy. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 24.) The generic digital marketing model is described in figure 1.

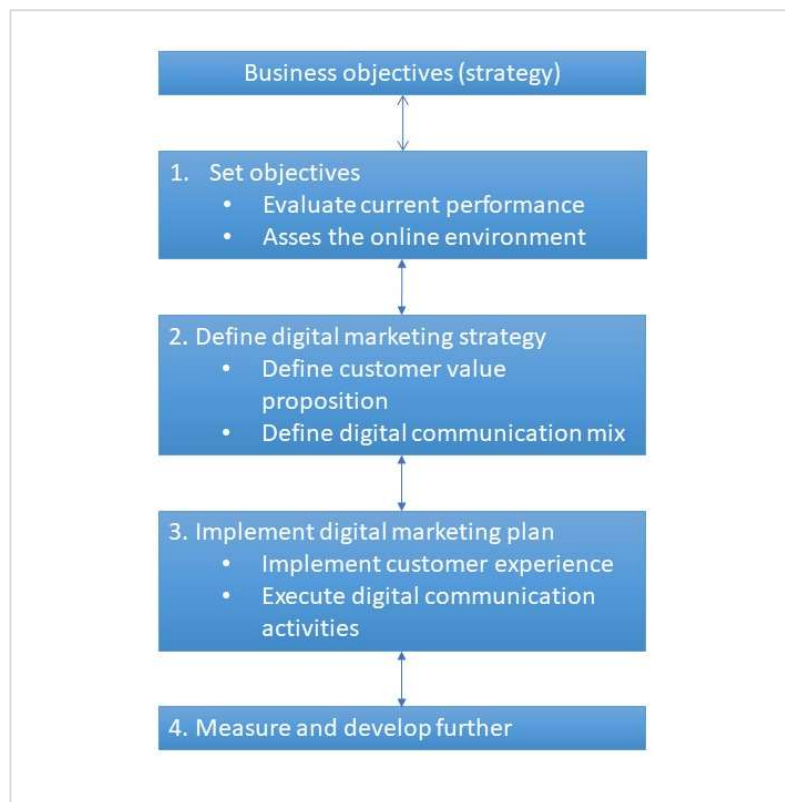


Figure 1. Generic digital marketing strategy model (adapted from Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 24)

As mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter, the digital marketing strategy should be integrated or derived from the overall business strategy. The generic digital marketing strategy model is following that guideline by having the overall business strategy as a basis for the digital marketing strategy on which the four steps are then based. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 25.)

The vision-based planning strategy model is based, like the name indicates, on a created vision and how to reach the vision. The vision-based planning model includes six steps (adapted from Kingsnorth 2016, 68–69):

1. Create the vision statement.
2. Create the mission statement.
3. Define the primary goals.
4. Define the specific objectives and action plans to reach each goal.
5. Execute each action plans to reach each objective.
6. Evaluate and evolve.

The vision-based strategy planning model is clear process that will lead from the start to the result with clear time frame. The model is though quite rigid and requires strong commitment from the team to follow it through. (Kingsnorth 2016, 68–69.)

The real-time planning strategy model is more flexible, and liquid compared to vision-based planning process. The real-time planning model enables the changes in the environment to change the strategy and plans when the changes occurs keeping the strategy and plans 'alive'. With real-time planning model it might be difficult to see the possible final results due to its informality and liquidity and also lack of clear structure. There are no documents or presentations to share with internal or external stakeholders which makes the communication of the strategy difficult. (Kingsnorth 2016, 70–71.)

Both digital marketing strategy models starts with considering what is the current situation, what is the goal and finally how to get there. After the first analysis is done the digital marketing strategy model can be decided and the planning work starts. (Kingsnorth 2016, 67–71.)

The fourth digital marketing strategy model is called **sales funnel-based planning model**. This strategy model is mainly targeted on business-to-business markets due to the fact that sales process in business-to-business requires many touchpoints before the purchase decision is made and the sales-funnel based planning model is supporting the

sales process. (Ginty, Vaccarello & Leake 2012, 21–22.) The steps in sales funnel-based planning model are:

1. Brand awareness
2. Interest/Engagement
3. Perception/Consideration
4. Decision

Potential customers need to know about the company, its products, and services in order to consider it as possible business partner. Raising brand awareness with different digital marketing channels is the key and essential part of the strategy. Publishing content that generates value among the customers create trust on the brand, company itself and its products and services. (Ginty et al. 2012, 22.)

Interest/Engagement steps is where the customer is already familiar with the company and its brand and is now looking for content about the possible solution for their need. At the same time the potential customer starts to build a relationship with the company while going through the content. A relationship that is the most valuable asset in business-to-business markets as already covered in chapter 3.1. Providing well targeted digital content and/or advertising increases the opportunity to new and continues business deals. (Ginty et al. 2012, 23.)

In Perception/Consideration step, the customer knows already what he wants and needs and is considering different options to fulfil the need. Here the mix of digital marketing channels and messages are put in to use for assuring the customer. After the purchase decision is made, content to assure for the right business choice and to ensure for continuous business relationship is needed. (Ginty et al. 2012, 24–25.)

3.5 Digital channel strategy

Current selection of digital marketing platforms may create confusion among companies which channel or platform to use in which situation or content. In addition, multiple channels hinder the customer engagement and maintaining customer relationship because the message might be dispersed to different channels. (Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann 2015, 124.) The use of digital marketing platform has changed in recent years from traditional one-way communication channel to more strategic digital channel role (Straker et al. 2015, 113). To have a clear perception of the roles of digital channels, a channel strategy is a solution.

The digital channel strategy can be perceived as digital marketing strategy for existing businesses. Here digital channel strategy defines objectives and different roles for digital channels of the business. The goal of digital channel strategy is to differentiate from competition by using digital channels effectively when delivering the message to target audience. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 139).

In this chapter are presented two different models how the digital marketing channels can be managed. The first governance model is called PESO model which categorizes the channels as paid, earned, shared and own medias (Dietrich 27 February 2020). The second model is focusing on the typologies of digital channels which are functional, social, community and corporate. The model is focusing on multiple use of different channel and how they are supporting each other. (Straker et al. 2015, 116.)

The PESO model is dividing the digital marketing channels into four different types that are paid, earned, shared, and owned medias. From digital perspective, the paid media refers to paid advertising in internet or sponsored content and advertising in social media channels. The earned media is the visibility created by others and gained from the actions or reputation that the company possess for example word-of-mouth or influencer relations. The shared media in other words is social media. The way companies use social media is evolving into partnerships, communities, promotions, and distributions, meaning readers of interesting content distribute forward using own personal social media accounts. The own media consist of content created and governed by the company such as websites, podcasts, customer experience stories and videos. (Dietrich 10 March 2020.) The whole model with main types and all relations are described in figure 2.

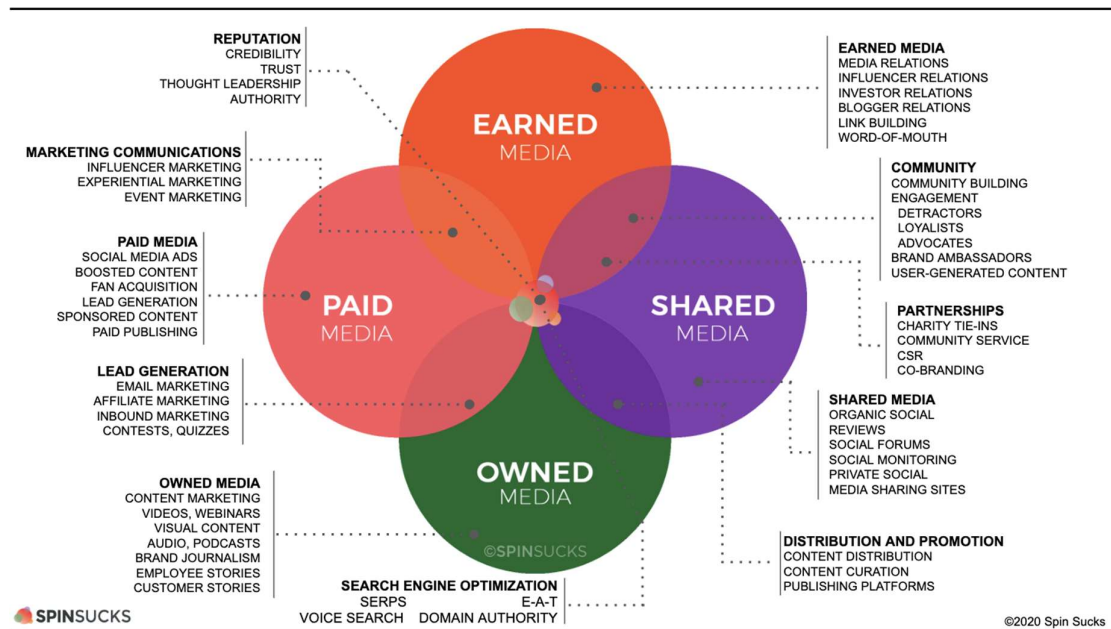


Figure 2. PESO model (Dietrich 2020)

The key factor of PESO model is to use all four types of media otherwise the model does not bring any value for the company's communication and marketing. Though the name of the model starts with letter P (paid media) it is not the order that the change of communication and/or marketing should start. It is recommended that the starting point of the model implementation is owned media (O), then earned (E) and shared (S) and finally paid media. (Dietrich 10 March 2020.)

The typological digital channel model is based on customer needs and how the needs are met using different digital channels. The model's typologies are functional, social, community and corporate. The functional type means the digital channels that are managed by one user or company such as a company website. The functional channel is informative where interaction is mainly one-way either from company to customer (information) or from customer-company (form or contact request). The second typology is social which is a digital channel managed by administrator who governs the users such as Facebook or Twitter or other social media platforms. Communication in social typology is a two-way communication, company can answer customer's post or question real time and hence have a real time conversation using the digital channel. Community typology refers to digital channels such as forums, blogs and Youtube which are managed by group of users who post contents that are relevant for the company. Customers can express their thoughts by commenting and/or rating the posts in the platform. The interaction is two-way but not as high as in social typology. The fourth typology is corporate which is one-way

communication from company to customer or vice versa. These channels create a deeper perception of the company though the interaction is low. (Straker et al. 2015, 116-120.)

It is essential that companies know their customers' needs and wants to reach and serve them in the best possible manner. The digital channel model gives several digital channel options based on the customer need and supporting channel option and possible result of the channel selection. (Straker et al. 2015, 122–123.) The digital channel model by Straker et al. is presented in appendix 1.

4 Conducting the research

This chapter presents the study of the commissioning company's current digital marketing to business-to-business segment. At first is described which research method was used when conducting the research and how the data was collected. The findings of the study and SWOT analysis of current digital marketing situation in company X are presented at the end of this chapter.

4.1 Case study as a research method

Case study focuses on observing practical real-life cases in their own environment as and when they occur which make each studied case unique. As a research method, case study is widely used because it is adjustable to many study fields such as business, communication, and education. (Aaltio & Heilmann 2012, 2.) Case study can be a deeper look at the case presenting the context, history, and the most important functions around it (Norander & Brandhorst 2018, 3). When selecting the case study, the researcher can decide whether he will study one case or several cases and then compares them to get deeper analysis of the unique situation (Norander & Brandhorsk 2018, 2).

At the beginning of the study, the researcher will create research questions which provide the purpose or objective of the case study. Defining research questions help researcher to set the boundaries for the study. (Norander & Brandhorsk 2018, 2.) Research questions also indicates what research methods are to be used. In case study, qualitative method and quantitative method or combination of these two methods are possible (Aaltio & Heilmann 2012, 2.)

After research questions are defined, the theoretical framework needs to be decided because it helps to scope the case study too when reflecting it to existing theories (Aaltio & Heilmann 2012, 5). But existing theory cannot be the foundation of the case nor an objective of the case study (Aaltio & Heilmann 2012, 4). Well created theoretical framework helps researcher to analyse the data and form results at the end of the study (Aaltio & Heilmann 2012, 5).

While gathering the data, by using proper data collecting method, it is evaluated by its quality and result (Aaltio & Heilmann 2012, 8). Collecting research data is often analysed at the same time by looking at the results what they can tell about the case (Cousin 2005, 425).

When the data is gathered, categorizing it according to themes or by research questions helps to see if the collected data answered the research questions (Cousin 2005, 425).

The objective of the case study is not to create generalizations or create general rules but more a deeper understanding of the case in question in its own surrounding (Aaltio & Heilmann 2012, 4).

4.2 Implementation of the study

The study was carried out by gathering secondary data only. The secondary data can be defined as a data that already exists and have been gathered at the first place for something else (Caemmerer 2008, 525).

The reason why secondary data was selected is that company X has already some experience on business-to-business digital marketing and digital marketing activities. Because of these activities, company X already has lot of data gathered by using many different tools such as Google Analytics, Hotjar and ClickDimensions, and which has not been analysed. Another reason for using secondary data is that the data supports the research questions and the objectives of this thesis.

The secondary data has been gathered from many digital marketing channels already for analysing for example customer behaviour (how customers has landed to certain web page?) or what kind of topics business-to-business customers would like to read (how many e-newsletter recipients have clicked Read more button in a newsletter?) but the coherent analysis of the overall situation is based on the current findings. Table 1 presents how the secondary data was gathered.

Table 1. The objective, limitations and timeline of data gathering.

Data source	Objective	Limitation	Schedule
Brand and customer survey	To see how the business-to-business customers are perceiving company X's brand as a competitive advantage and how they value the digital marketing activities performed.	The number of respondents was limited hence only few target groups were participating to the survey.	March, 2020
company website (including search engine optimization and digital advertising)	To see how website visitors are consuming the content in company website and whether visitor personas (in this case business-to-business customers) can be recognised. The possibility of investing for digital advertising campaigns is observed too.	Big part of the visitors is expected to be consumers due to ongoing digital advertising campaigns that are driving traffic company websites. Only one search engine marketing campaign has been performed for business-to-business customers meaning that there might not be enough data for objective analysis.	July 2019 - April 2020
Email marketing	To find out what kind of newsletter topics and other content business-to-business customers would like to receive from the company X. What kind of content engage the customer to read and find out more?	E-newsletters have been sent to only business-to-business customers whose contact information is available in customer relations management tool and who have not unsubscribed the newsletter	July 2019 - April 2020
Social media channel: Youtube	To find out what kind of video content creates engagement from target group	The viewers in Youtube may not be only professionals but	July 2019 - April 2020

	based on watch time and channel subscribers.	can be also consumers who are interested in HVAC topics.	
Social media channel: Twitter	To identify channel's possibilities to reach the selected target groups	The followers and people engaged with company X's tweets may include both business-to-business customers as well as consumers. The data availability of different professionals using Twitter.	July 2019 - April 2020
Social media channel: LinkedIn	To find the content that creates the most engagement in target groups.	LinkedIn is profiled as a network of professionals, but people behaves according to their interest not according to user categorization or business types.	July 2019 - April 2020
Social media channel: Facebook	To gather information if Facebook can be utilised as a marketing channel for business-to-business customers.	Facebook channel is mainly targeted to consumers which are a major part of the followers that company X has now for its page.	July 2019 - April 2020
Account based marketing	To observe how the content targeted to business-to-business customer creates interest and traffic, and at the end generate leads for sales.	The campaign was targeted to only few targets groups within the segment hence the limited amount of data to be analysed.	July 2019 - April 2020
Marketing automation campaign	To find out whether marketing automation programmes could be utilised for maintain the customer relationships.	Only few attempts in the history which means that not enough qualified data is available.	March, 2020

4.3 Findings of the study

In the following chapter, the findings of the study about different digital marketing channels that has been used in company X are presented. At the end of the chapter 3, there is an analysis of the current digital marketing as a whole in the commissioning company X by using SWOT-analysis method.

The following findings are analysed and reported as presented in table 1 by each channel separately. The findings are reported in such a way that research questions presented in chapter 2.3 are being answered.

4.3.1 Brand and customer satisfaction survey

Company X has measured customer satisfaction regularly. The latest survey is from 2019. The survey was sent to selected group of customers (in total 441 persons) from the customer relationship management software. The survey was sent by email by a third-party consultant to secure the objectivity and reliability of the answers. The survey was conducted from September 26 to October 24, 2019. Answers were analysed anonymously. The contact information was gathered only if the respondent was willing to take part of the draw. The contact information and the survey answers could not be linked to each other.

According to the survey, the company's brand is all about quality and domestic. Previous years also reliable has been one of the key associations with the company X but unfortunately severe manufacturing issues in Central Europe manufacturing facilities affected the results and reliable is no longer top association of company X.

The commissioning company is also considered as innovative and top-quality technical know-how. One of the key brand values is partnership and based on the survey the company is a valuable partner for the respondents because the company X understand their needs and is available and supportive as well as committed to respondent's own business.

When asking about the quality, company X is considered as high-quality system provider and reliable systems. The respondents also stated that company X provides great value to respondent's own business and it is easy to do business with company X which all makes

respondent's life easier. The commissioning company is also seen as a sustainable partner who cares about green building practices and sustainable solutions and systems.

In the brand and customer satisfaction survey, there were also questions about what kind of marketing materials the customers value. Figure 3 shows the answers how satisfied the respondents are with the marketing material company X is providing.



Figure 3. Satisfaction of marketing material by company X

Based on the survey results, the traditional printed product information is still highly valued among the respondents. Reason for the result might be that most of the respondents are installers, distributors (wholesalers and retailers) who are using the printed material when meeting the customer or being on the construction site. The respondents are also working daily with company X's products and systems, hence affecting the answers.

The low results for the websites indicates that the content is not targeted only for the business-to-business customers and the information that business-to-business customers are looking for is not easily found hence the websites are rated low. When the customers do find the needed information such as technical documentation, they are satisfied with the quality of the document.

To summarize the findings, business-to-business customers do value the commissioning company as a brand but not the digital marketing activities that has been performed. Specially websites received poor score from the customers.

4.3.2 Company website

One of the most important marketing and communication channel for the commissioning company is its website. The site has gone through many changes and updates, latest from the summer 2017. The development of the website has had many stages and reasons for change. First, there was own website with own design and structure in Finland. Then cooperation started with other Nordic countries, and soon there was harmonized design and structure in websites in the Nordic units in the company X. In 2014, new website was launched where visual lay out, structure and strategy were aligned in every European unit. Since then, the website has gone through minor developments focusing on serving customers better and creating the best possible customer experience in the web. Figure 4 illustrates the development of the websites.



Figure 4. Company website development 1998, 2002, 2014

The current set up of the website is based on how company X is categorizing its business, strategy and systems/solutions. There are five top categories. The first two topics presents the offering and feasibility of company X's solutions. The innovation part is about the strategic subjects or innovations that company X is focusing on. The company part is about the company itself including links to investors' sites and open vacancies. In the service section are described the services that company X offers for its customer, both professional and consumers whether the service is digital (tools and calculators) or face-to-face service (technical support, quotation service). The structure of the websites is designed and created by the centralized European marketing team together with a web design partner and accepted by the executive committee of company X Corporation which is the highest operational management level of the commissioning company.

Feedback is gathered from the website visitors by using third party tool called Hotjar. The tool provides an instant visual feedback opportunity with 5 step smiley faces and free text field. The poll is in each page in pages of the company website. Feedback is gathered and

stored by Hotjar in their own cloud service. The report about the feedback is visual consist of the page from the feedback was given, the given smiley face and possible free text feedback. The feedback is anonymous. Figure 5 gives an example of such a feedback.

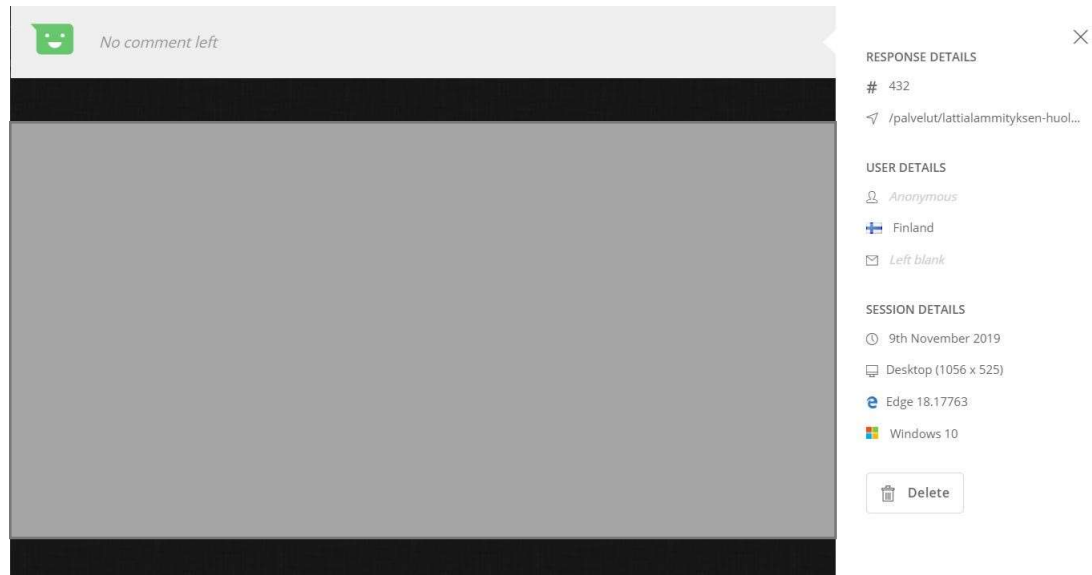


Figure 5. An example of a feedback from the company website using Hotjar tool

The structure has received feedback from the customers via sales representatives and from the personnel being too complex and not being clear enough. Sales representatives have given feedback from customers saying that they do not categorize or look at company X's product folio the same way as the company is presenting it. The customers are not aware of the three-level product hierarchy (system, product group, product line) structure that is implemented in the website and expected the customers to follow. Instead, the customers are looking for a specific product and its details or installation guidelines straight from the start and hence using the site search or general search engines such as Google or Bing.

The content of the website is mostly technical information about the products and systems. When creating the content already existing materials were used for example brochures and installation manuals and sales presentations. Videos and images have been used to lighten the content and to support the text itself. Related documents and supporting links to services, tools and additional information are provided too. The content structure varies some between pages and sections of the sites. There is no clear goal or target what the pages are serving for.

Target group of the websites was firstly the business-to-business customer, installers, distributors, specifiers and end-users for example water utilities and municipalities. When company X launched services for consumers, the website content was expanded with consumer targeted information. At that point there was no clear plan how to manage the content between business-to-business customers and consumers which led to present situation that the content is mixed. The offered services and solutions for consumers has increased during the last years and therefore the website content for consumers has increased too.

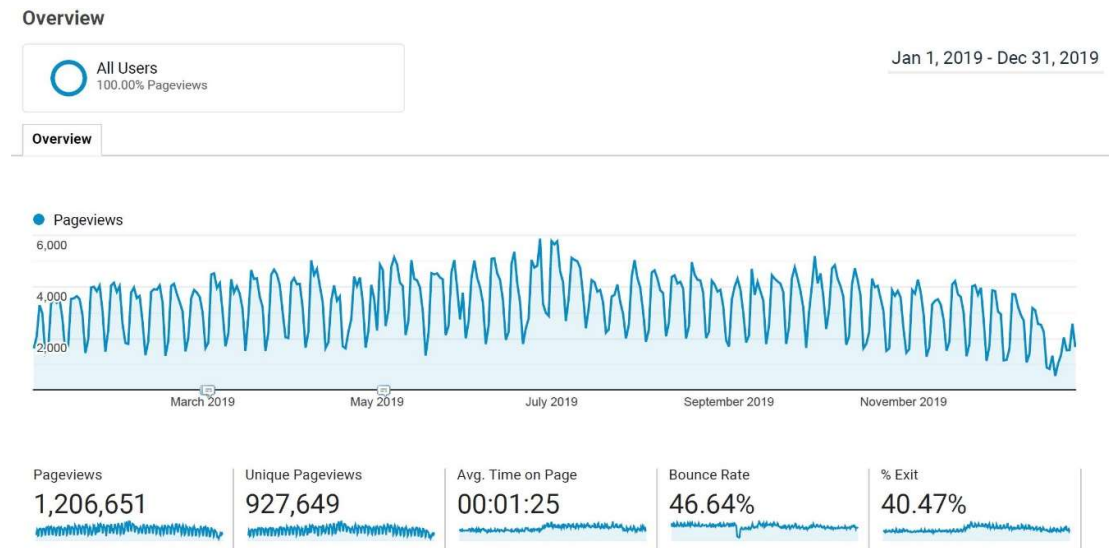


Figure 6. The complete year of 2019 page views of company X's pages

Company website gained over 1,2 million pageviews in 2019 as shown in figure 6. Average time on page in 2019 was 01:25. The reason for the short time on page is due to behaviour of website visitors. Business-to-business customers are typically searching for detailed information with specific search term. After the information is found by using search engine or site search, he leaves the site to complete his own work. Figure 7 indicates the detailed search terms used in company website in 2019.

Search Term ?	Total Unique Searches ?	Results Pageviews / Search ?
	36,908 % of Total: 100.00% (36,908)	1.25 Avg for View: 1.25 (0.00%)
1. [REDACTED]	2,730 (7.40%)	1.21
2. [REDACTED]	2,019 (5.47%)	1.23
3. [REDACTED]	1,305 (3.54%)	1.15
4. hinnasto	1,196 (3.24%)	1.16
5. Tehtaanhinnasto	828 (2.24%)	1.11
6. [REDACTED]	446 (1.21%)	1.60
7. termostaatti	328 (0.89%)	1.20
8. lattiakaivo	309 (0.84%)	1.33
9. hanakulmarasia	218 (0.59%)	1.24
10. lattialämmitys	193 (0.52%)	1.23
11. [REDACTED]	190 (0.51%)	1.16
12. [REDACTED]	145 (0.39%)	1.39
13. salaoja	144 (0.39%)	1.21
14. [REDACTED]	128 (0.35%)	1.27
15. [REDACTED]	116 (0.31%)	1.36
16. [REDACTED]	108 (0.29%)	1.06
17. pumppukaivo	107 (0.29%)	1.62
18. materiaalipankki	106 (0.29%)	1.34
19. sadevesikaivo	99 (0.27%)	1.36
20. jakotukki	94 (0.25%)	1.34

Figure 7. Top 20 search terms of company X's websites in 2019

Finnish marketing team is responsible for the production of the content to the website together with different stakeholders; product offering management (products/systems), human resource (open vacancies), company (corporate communications) and services (customer service). The text and images are modified according to the instructions provided by European marketing team. Technical maintenance of the websites is governed by third party supplier for every European units. In order to develop the website, there is a key user group that has members in each business area of Europe. The key users act as a link between the local editors and the central online marketing team by training and supporting the editors in their daily work with the website. They also are responsible for innovating and developing the sites and as well as testing for new technical improvements and user interface.

Based on the findings of the website, the website content is not optimally structured and presented business-to-business customers to find the right content at the right time. Since the content is now mixed, it is difficult to recognize which website visitor is business-to-business customer or and which is consumer. The findings also show that there is no clear customer path for business-to-business customers on the website and defined goals

too. The purpose of the website now seems to be everything to everyone which results that the content is targeted and suitable for the visitor's own need.

Due to increasing use of search engine and the fact that websites are the most important digital marketing channel for the company X, marketing team in Finland decided to out-source the search engine optimization (SEO) to a third-party partner in 2012. After that, the search engine optimization has been systematic and continuous work with improving search engine results. According to Google Analytics reports company's website ranking is high in each strategical important web page. The SEO work continues with analysing the new content with predefined SEO instructions in addition the page scanning after the publishing. The SEO partner is performing monthly check ups for the company websites and search engine ranking reporting the result.

To support the search engine optimization and to raise awareness on company X's solutions, the online advertising was started 2016 with promoting consumer services in search engines. Then the advertising expanded to display advertising and specially remarketing advertising. At the same time, company's Facebook posts were sponsored, and few Facebook advertising campaigns were tested.

All of the above-mentioned advertising was targeted to consumers and traffic was driven to company website to specific landing pages with call to action targets. Only one search engine marketing campaign for business-to-business customers was tested but the results (increasing traffic to company website) were not good which resulted the campaign being stopped after few months running.

The findings indicate that the search engine optimization has been done systematically and it has resulted a good ranking in search results. This though needs to be followed carefully because it can change if not followed closely. Supporting the search engine visibility by using search engine advertising and other digital advertising such as display, has not been used in business-to-business customers due to poor results from the test campaign but the expectations of that campaign may have been too high. Especially if the expectations were on the same level as consumer marketing campaign where there are so much more buyers than in business markets.

4.3.3 Email marketing

Company X has a long history of email marketing. It started 2008 with a Christmas wishes for the customers. The email marketing tool was a side product to a web page platform

and the commissioning company was interested in trying the new marketing and communication channel that was trending at the time. The recipients were taken from the current customer data register with anyone having an email address.

From that moment on, the newsletters were sent when there was a need to communicate something strategically important to the clientele. Product launches, exhibitions, events, changes in the organization, publications etc. were the topics in the newsletters. The newsletters were sent to all customer in the register. Only few newsletters were targeted to only certain customer groups.

In addition, the platform did not provide any statistics about the newsletters. No reports were offered how many had opened and read the newsletters. Only the feedback from the sales were available, though the feedback was influenced by the attitude of the sales representatives towards the email marketing. In addition, the feedback was never collected systematically.

During the summer 2015 the email marketing tool was changed. Again, the tool was a side product of the webpage platform Sitecore 6.5, which made it complex to use due to many steps in the creation process.

The email marketing tool and the customer relations management tool did not have integration between, so the recipients were taken as an excel file from the customer relations management tool (CRM). This step was time consuming since the Excel file needed modification before it could be imported to the email marketing tool. The opportunity for human mistakes was related to marketing specialist's Excel skills.

Sitecore 6.5 tool provided limited statistics. The number of deliverables, open rate, click rate and bounce rates were available in the reporting tool. The statistics were reported such a difficult manner that separate guidelines were needed. Figure 3 is an example of newsletter statistics available from Sitecore 6.5.

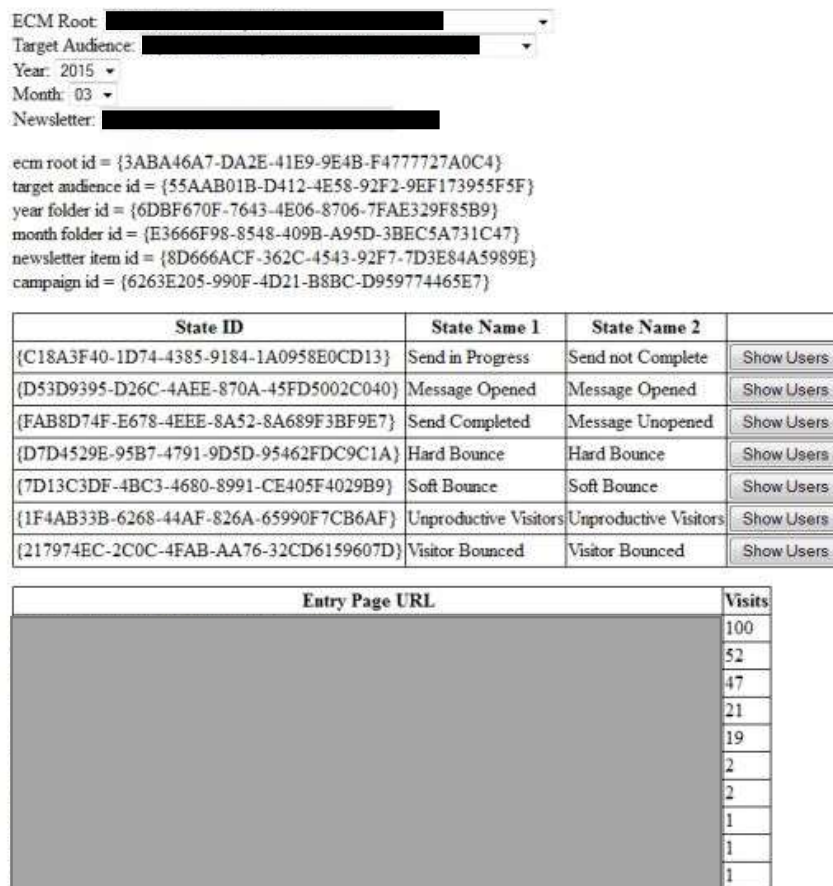


Figure 8. An example of available statistics from one newsletter

The email marketing concept was set up according to customer groups which were in line with the sales organizations hence the sales managers for each sales organization were ought to take the responsibility for the content planning for the newsletters to his/hers customer groups. Also, the timing of the newsletter were sales managers and marketing teams to be decided.

In practice, the responsibility fell to marketing team and the team members were forced to press the sales managers to provide content for the newsletter. The offering team, which is the third player for producing content, also needed some pressure by the marketing team. This led to the point that the planned schedule for the newsletters were discarded and the plan was not followed.

The Finnish management team saw the email marketing as an important communication channel between the company and the customers, and they demanded to have an efficient email marketing plan according to the customer groups. The demand from the management and the lack of commitment from the middle management were causing big

pressure on marketing team to have an efficient customer-oriented email marketing function. That was the reason to search for a new set up when there was an upcoming update of customer relation management tool with modern email marketing integration in 2017.

4.3.4 The customer feedback survey about email marketing

Due to upcoming change of customer relations management tool it became possible to manage the email marketing from the integration of CRM system. The new CRM tool was Microsoft Dynamics and the marketing tool was ClickDimensions. Before establishing the email marketing concept for Finland, the marketing team decided to conduct a customer survey to find out how the customers are seeing email marketing. The survey's invitation letter and the research questions are in appendix 2.

The survey was sent to almost 15 000 customer contacts who has received a newsletter from the company X and with 1440 responses the response rate was 10%. The feedback survey link was open two weeks from October 25, 2017 to November 8, 2017 and one reminder notice was sent after one week from the first invitation to those recipients who were not yet answered the survey. The creation and controlling of the survey were managed using Questback Essential tool which provided the possibility for online survey.

The survey included 7 questions and an open feedback option. The results of the newsletter study are presented in appendix 3. Based on the results of the survey, the newsletters were considered good (69%) or even excellent (6%). For those respondents, who answered poor or moderate, had a following question asking for the reasons for answering such. The most common answer was the newsletter topics not being useful for the recipients or there were too many content/topics in the newsletter.

The next question for all recipients were what kind of newsletter they would like to receive in the future, more customer group focused, more topic focused newsletter or a combination of the topic focused and campaigns relevant to recipient. Most of the answers were more topic focused (40%) or topic focused with additional campaign newsletters (35%).

When asking about the topics that customers are interested in, the majority of customers would like to receive newsletters about HVAC products (74%) and infrastructure products (48%). Information about exhibitions and events where company X is present was also considered interested subject with 41% of the responds. Training and webinar information was interested to 40 % of the respondents.

Frequency of the newsletter got the least variation within the respondents. 41% wishes to receive the newsletter when there is something to communicate, 31 % wishes to receive the newsletter once in a month and 28% wishes to receive the newsletter once in a quarter. Based on these results the email marketing concept was modified to more topic specific model.

4.3.5 Newsletter model

The new email marketing model based on customer feedback survey was presented to the top management which accepted it. The new model meant the management and responsibility of the implementation to shift from sales managers to marketing team. Which was one of the changes that marketing team wanted to have to the process because the pressuring of the sales management to produce content was too time consuming and effortless. The email marketing plan with specific content descriptions and time plan was made for the year 2018.

The email marketing plan did not have time to start before the first obstacle rose. The plan was very ambitious, and it was based on two marketing specialists to implement. When the human resources occupied for the email marketing were suddenly half, the plan was too heavy to one marketing specialist to manage.

Before the email marketing plan was adjusted another modification was becoming, the GDPR, General Data Protection Regulation. Being a European wide company and operating in Germany, commissioning company needed to follow the new GDPR rules strictly according to German regulations, which meant that for the newsletter the subscription process became complex to understand and for the customers difficult to complete. The difference between Finnish regulation and German regulation made it difficult to adjust the European wide tool and process to Finnish markets.

The new subscription process was complex and after combining the subscription process to the topics that customers wished, the whole email marketing model grew big and difficult to manage. In addition, multiple problems with the software and automatic backlog processes were common. Which in turn minimized the email marketing activities in the commissioning company.

The findings related to email marketing is that the newsletters from the company X are valued among the business-to-business customers but there is definitely a need for improving the process of creating and sending the newsletters with a plan what and when to

be sent to which target group. Another finding is that the content is valued by those who opens the newsletters, but the total number of opens are not that high. As a result, the content with text, headings and call to action buttons needs to be attractive and well targeted towards the target group.

The existing model is based for informing current customers whose contact data is already registered in CRM. There is no marketing campaign to attract new registrations for the newsletter. The marketing campaign could act as a lead generator for sales too.

4.3.6 Social media presence

Company X had many years a decision that it will not create social media profiles because lack of resources, but the businesses change as well as the customers. Suddenly company where in a situation where new marketing channels started to replace the brochures, exhibitions, and events as well as websites in some parts. Therefore, company X decided to enter to social media world.

The most agile country units within the group corporation started to create their own accounts and profiles without any corporate guidelines which ended up in several different kind of social media profiles. In 2017, corporate communications published a corporate social media guideline for the employees which is shown in figure 9.



Figure 9. Corporate social media guideline

The guidelines concentrate more on how the company should be discussed in social media and how the employees should act in social media. It lacks the guidelines for company's strategy for social media from business and marketing point of view, how the different social media channels are defined, what elements need to be considered when launching a campaign or advertising campaign in social media for example.

Company X in Finland created its own guidelines for social media when launching the Facebook page. The guidelines consist how to handle negative feedback or product complaint, the rules of Facebook page, risk analysis and general instructions for social media. These guidelines were available in organization wide Sharepoint site.

During the launching of Facebook page in Finland, the organization had some negative attitude towards the social media in general. It was considered as stupid time-consuming entertainment and there was no business potential in it nor does social media support the business or brand of the company X.

Marketing team organized few training sessions to change the attitude and to reveal the possibilities that social media can offer to companies and businesses as well to create commitment for content providing. The training sessions had people from top management, product offering team, sales teams, human resources and marketing team. The atmosphere was at first very negative and prejudiced, but the consultant was able to change the attitude and to create even low level of enthusiasm. The aim of the training sessions was to change the attitude and even create a social media model for the company.

In 2018 marketing team suggested that the social media function should be outsourced to dedicated social media agency due to lack of resources and many new possibilities that social media can provide. Wide review was done to find the suitable partner for social media of the company. The results were presented to top management with a budget estimate. The management decision was negative due to budget reasons and social media should continue by own resources but limited and narrow focus.

To help the marketing team to provide interesting and alternating content sales was contacted to provide content from the field with more daily topics. From each sales team one person was designated to contribute or gather ideas and topics from the rest of the sales teams. Even own hashtag was created for the sales to use in their post. The purpose was that the sales representatives would publish pictures, thoughts etc. in their own social media profiles with a certain hashtag which the marketing team follows and can share in the official social media channels of the company X. By this model, the posts are delivered via

sales representatives own social media network but also via company's network. The model would have also supported the trend of social media where personal posts gather more commitment than official company posts. The idea was firstly taken with enthusiastic but also considered as extra work. Therefore, only few sales representatives are publishing content with the hashtag.

4.3.7 Youtube

Company X's first social media channel was Youtube. It never had strong focus but rather just a place where to store all the product, installation and marketing videos that company X had. The channel also supported websites from where links were created to the specific video. Since then the channel has been the same. Only the number of videos has grown.

The types of the videos are almost the same. In recent years, more marketing and branding videos has been produced by the corporate communications. Also new product launches include a branding video in addition to product and installation video. But most of the videos in the channel are installation videos or technical product videos.

Youtube channel do not have any decided specific function nor strategy, not even a target group. It is just a place to store videos from where customers can search for videos and more information about company's solutions. The channel is not being promoted in other social media channels of the commissioning company either.

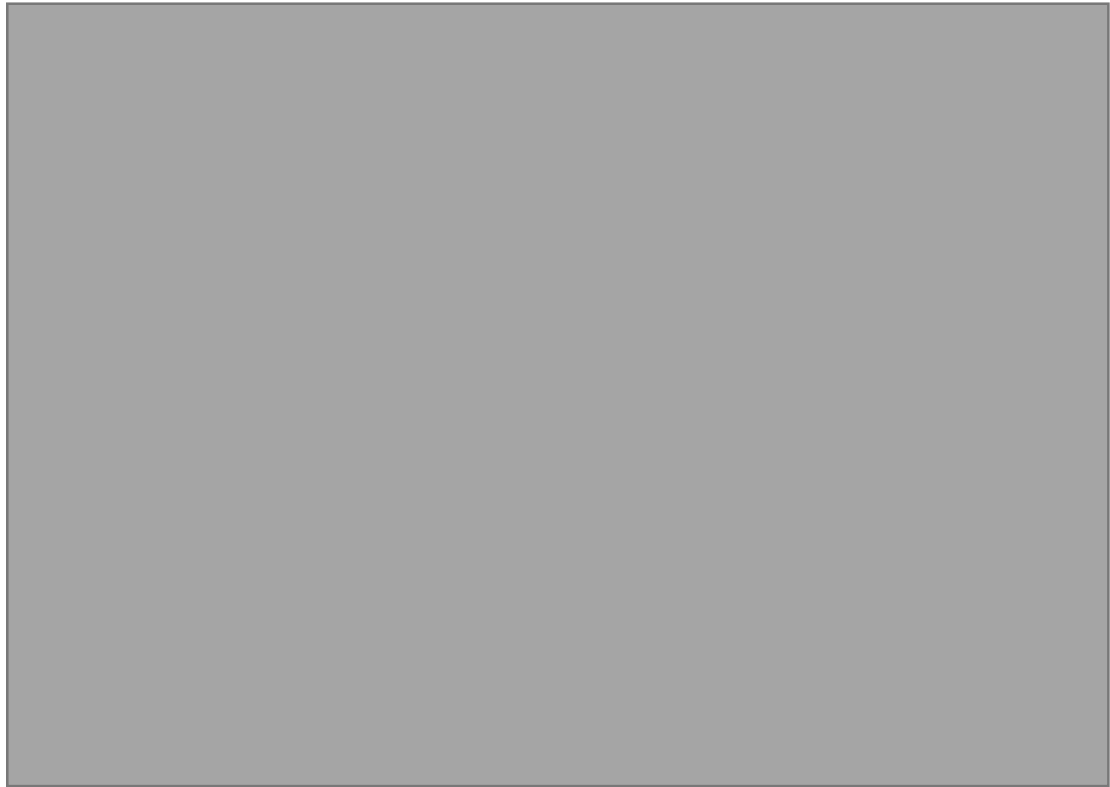


Figure 10. Top playlists of 2019 of company X's Youtube channel

The top playlists of 2019 based on views are presented in figure 10. Most of the content is targeted for consumers. Though there are product videos that presents new water technology in commissioning company field of business and it is required that the device is installed by professional HVAC installer, business-to-business customers are interested of the product. The second position is held by a fitting series' playlist that is targeted only to business-to-business customers and that was launched during the spring 2019. Heating and cooling playlist and installation and usage video playlist are targeted for both business-to-business customers as well as business-to-consumers.

Figure 11 shows the most popular videos by views in company X's Youtube channel in 2019. It can be seen that the number one videos of 2019 are presenting the newest innovation of the company X. This is due to multichannel digital marketing campaigns that started in May 2019 and is still continuing. The campaign also includes Youtube video ads which impacts the number one positions of the most viewed videos.

The first video targeted to business-to-business customers is found on place 13, a fitting system for installers. Videos concerning installation of underfloor heating cables are targeted both for consumers and business-to-business customers. Most of the top 15 videos are targeted to consumers. One reason for consumer videos being top of the list is the

fact that there are so much more consumers than business-to-business customers. Another reason is that recently all the uploaded video content has been targeted to consumers.

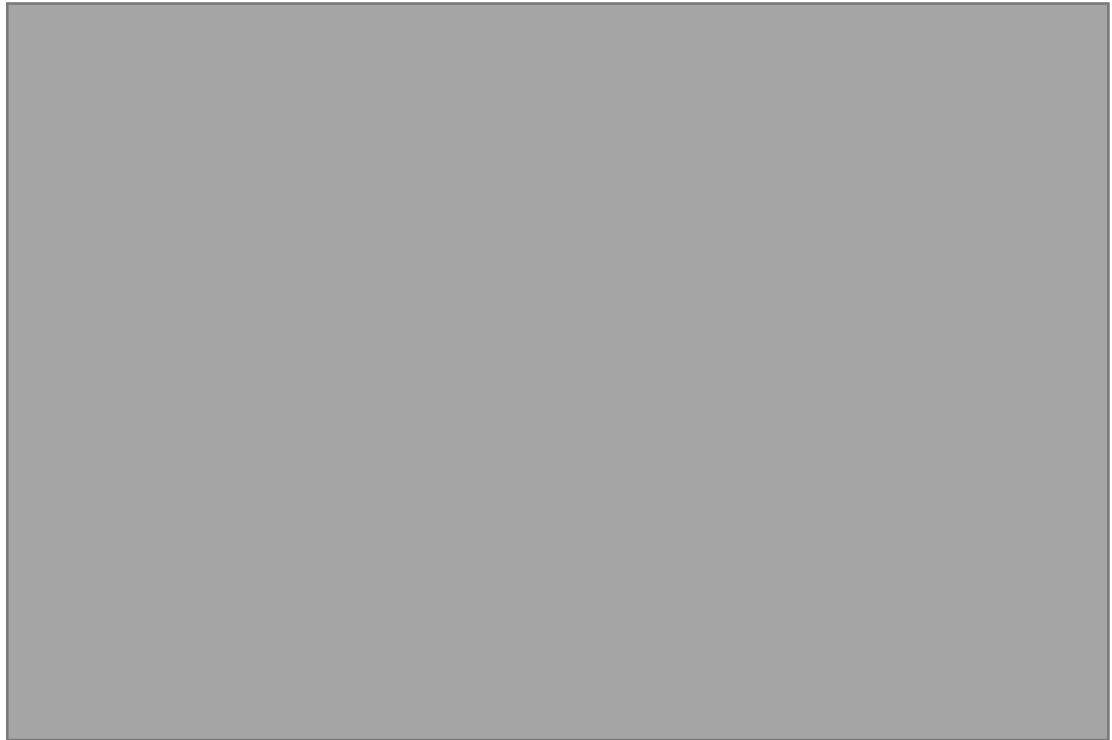


Figure 11. The top 15 viewed videos of 2019 in company X's Youtube channel

When observing the age of the viewers, the statistics support both the end-consumer target group specification and the installer target group. Most of the viewers are from age group of 35-44 years (30%), the following age groups are 25-34 (23 %) and 45-54 (23%). The total absent of under 25 years old is concerning because the future customers, partners and employees are in that age group. For this there might be several reasons. One is that company X is not known as a company for that age group which in turn means more brand activities and/or school cooperation to raise awareness. Another is the business field of company X. People under age 25 are rarely interested in HVAC or infrastructure of municipalities unless they are working on the business field. Third reason is the type of videos company X has in its channel. They are not ranked interested or popular ones as they are very business-like and serious. Under 25 years are more interested in fun and humorous videos which can be shared in other social media channels too.

The gender deviation is 59 % male and 41 % female. This is not a surprising figure since the business field is highly male populated due to number of plumbers, civil engineering contractors, HVAC designers and technicians that are traditionally occupations for men.

The content of the videos is supporting the viewers in their work and not amuse or entertain them.

99 % of the viewers have not subscribed company X's Youtube channel. The number is not alarming since company X is not trying to attract subscribers as much as possible. But rather to support the customer to find the needed information about company X's solutions and products hence strengthening the purchasing decision. The videos in the Youtube channels are being watched when there is a need not for time consuming.

To increase the engagement of the viewers and to harmonize the brand feeling in each company X's country channels, there was a visual update at the end of 2019. A new brand element was introduced to the video's thumbnail in order to highlight the brand and marking the video as company X's entity.

Another finding from the analysis is that most of the videos in company X's Youtube channels are targeted for both business-to-business customers as well as consumers. This increases the difficulty of purely analyse content either business-to-business nor consumer content.

It is quite evident that video content needs to be improved and provide more content for business-to-business customers. The video content can be delivered and shared in many digital marketing channels. Also, the structure of the channel can be changed to fit more to target groups for example, own video sections or even channels for consumers and business-to-business customers.

4.3.8 Twitter

Company X in Finland has had a twitter account since January 2017. The account was established to gain attention of journalists and to take part of the twitter discussions about HVAC and infrastructure. Another aim for the account was to distribute the news and press releases published by the company X.

Since January 2017 until end of June 2019, there has been 268 tweets and 152 followers. The account is not active as it can be. There hardly are any conversations based on the tweets nor is there any shares of the tweets. The most popular tweets during the last three months has been about open vacancies and one survey result about tap water renovations in single family homes.

Twitter account has been only a distribution channel and has not been focus area of social media for the commissioning company therefore the initial goal of attaining attention of journalists and creating or being part of discussions has not been achieved.

The history of company X's Twitter use indicates that there are lots of opportunities how to use Twitter, but the discussion is whether Twitter is the right channel to reach the business-to-business target groups and whether the commissioning company has the needed resources for managing Twitter conversation.

4.3.9 LinkedIn

The LinkedIn channel in company X is managed by the Corporate Communication. The channel is a global channel that each country unit is using. When publishing in local language, the post is targeted by location.

The target groups of the LinkedIn channel are the business-to-business customers, the installers, distributors, designers, municipalities, owners of utilities, construction companies and also students and schools. The purpose of the channel is to improve the thought leadership of the business area, to distribute professional articles and posts about the business, to support the local sales operations, and to improve the employer branding of the commissioning company. The focus is more on professionalism and future thinking than marketing and promoting daily bulk solutions.

The posts have been mostly about reference cases and projects where company X has been involved with supplying special knowledge and solutions. The posts also have been professional articles for example about new water technologies, current topics from the business field, opinion and statement writings about infrastructure and new innovations for renovation and new build.

The channel has over 20 000 followers globally and it is the only channel for the Finnish country unit where some commitment from the followers are being able to create. Most of the posts gain several likes, few even comments. The type of content does not have any impact on the level of commitment in the channel, whether the post is about official news or professional article the commitment is on the same level.

As other social media channels, LinkedIn has not been used as its full potential allows. The result of the observation is that LinkedIn can be used to improve the awareness of

company X digital services and tools for certain business-to-business target groups such as HVAC designers, architects and investors.

Another result is that the content needs to be fine-tuned to gain reaction. For example, the heading of the post and the introduction text needs to create interest for the reader. Neutral corporate language is not creating any reaction.

4.3.10 Facebook

Company X's Facebook account was established in November 2015 to support the consumer targeted service. Before the channel was published there was a big groundwork done. For the implementation phase, company X had a consultant agency to support the Facebook launch. From company X's side a social media team was established where sales, product management, human resources and marketing had members.

As the channel started to gain followers, the contribution from the social media team members decreased. The team was unable to share ideas and find new content topics for the channel which resulted the team meetings to stop and the responsibility of the posts was on few people. Frequently, some employees shared a content proposal which was published when suitable.

Company X's Facebook page got new target group in 2016 when the Finnish top management decided that the business-to-business customers need to be taken into account in Facebook too. After which the marketing team started to create content for business-to-business customers such as designers, installers, retailers and wholesalers. With the decision, it was also attempted to expand the content more and make business group A more familiar to followers.

When publishing a post in a Facebook most of the likes are coming from the employees of the commissioning company X. This same trend can be seen in other social media channels of the company X. Though the target group of the Facebook channel is mainly the consumers and the content is targeted to consumers most committed followers are still employees. The posts targeted to business-to-business customers do not receive as much commitment as consumer posts.

The number of followers has grown slowly but steadily from 2015. In April 2020, there are approximately 1700 followers in the Facebook channel. 54% of the followers are females

which is in fact quite the opposite of the perceived gender division of the HVAC and infra fields as well as Youtube channel.

The findings indicate that Facebook have not been utilised in business-to-business marketing too much. Though Facebook is considered as personal profile channel, the professional content might gain attraction with interesting content if the user is working on HVAC or infrastructure business field. By posting both types of content (targeted to consumers and business-to-business customers) creates and completes an image of company X as a leading professional in its business fields.

4.3.11 Account-based Marketing

In autumn 2018 started a project where account-based marketing (ABM) concept was planned to test in business-to-business segment and especially infrastructure target group. The target was to support the sales funnel in order to follow the actual quotation that the customer has received from us by providing native articles about the systems that the customer has asked quotation from the commissioning company. The concept required interface between the supplier's platform and commissioning company's customer relations management software (CRM).

The project was common for Finland and Sweden. These two units were selected because the number of website visitors and quality of data in CRM. The campaign was targeted to selected company's which had corporate and recognizable domains and had visited company website in order the cookie to be installed to visitor's device, mobile, tablet or desktop.

ABM campaign was soon expanded to more accounts than just those ones who had open quotation in the CRM to raise awareness of the company itself and its solutions and services. In a short time, it resulted more article readers, video viewers and even web site visitors. Because of the expansion of the target accounts, the list now consists of target accounts that are not relevant, and the list is being reviewed by the sales.

Marketing has nurtured some accounts by sending emails about the same topic as in the native ad but with different content after which the sales has contacted the customer. The feedback from the sales has been controversial. Some has reported that the customers have been more aware of what company X has to offer and some has reported that there is no change within the customer. The project was planned to continue for few years ahead because the sales funnel is long, 3 to 5 years so the expected results can be seen

earliest at 2020 autumn. But due to high costs and low commitment from sales, the programme was stopped at the beginning of 2020.

The result was that company gained good awareness among the targeted customers based on website visits and time consumed with the marketing content. But being a support activity in the sales funnel and qualifying leads for sales, it failed. Marketing organisation qualified the leads with follow-up emails and tracking the commitment but for the sales organisations this kind of operating model was new and hence their commitment for the programme and for the leads were low. As a digital marketing campaign there were good elements, but the expectations were too unrealistic.

Account-based Marketing can be a good and efficient channel to reach certain business-to-business customers. For example, it can be utilised for reaching both HVAC and infra designers to promote digital tools to make their work easier, faster and efficient. This can be a further development step in the digital marketing strategy.

4.4 SWOT-analysis of current digital marketing situation

Based on the findings of the study and to summarize the current state analysis, the SWOT method was chosen. The SWOT method consist of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Table 2. The SWOT-analysis of current situation of digital marketing in company X.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company X is a well-known brand among business-to-business customers in HVAC and infrastructure business fields. - Digital marketing is flexible and agile. Learnings are put into actions. - The online visibility is high. Company website is ranked high in search engines. - Company X has lot of different kind of content that can be used in different channels. - Digital marketing function has many supporting organizations (product offering, sales, Central Europe marketing from both business groups A and B) - The partner network for digital marketing is performing well in efficiency and result point of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of resources, there is only one person who is responsible for digital marketing in company X. - Development projects take long time and still the need for localization is high due to centralized marketing. - No vision or plan how digital marketing should go ahead. - Many adhocs now which are time consuming and takes focus from the planned activities. - General feeling of incoherent in digital marketing.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are room for improvement which is considered positive trend in the commissioning company. - Digital message can be more targeted to fit target groups. - Integrations from digital marketing applications to customer relationship management tool do not exist. - Email marketing programmes have not been tested before. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High competition in digital visibility in company X's field of business. - The large portion of business-to-business target groups who is still not comfortable with digital tools and devices. - Digital channels get filled with irrelevant content due to lack of digital marketing strategy. - Ability to adjust to fast development of digital marketing applications and methods.

The SWOT analysis shows that company X has done digital marketing for some time now and quite systematically but now it needs to lift the quality and level of marketing to new era of digital marketing. Commissioning company is a leading company of its field of business hence it needs to be one of the leading digital marketing professionals in its field of business too.

Many of the opportunities and threats can be solved by creating a digital marketing strategy for the commissioning company. The vision and clear way forward create a base for optimizing the digital marketing channel mix for the company and hence improve the reach of the marketing messages among business-to-business customers.

5 Digital marketing strategy for business-to-business segment for the commissioning company X

In this chapter the digital marketing strategy for company X's business-to-business segment is presented. The strategy is based on the findings of the study made of current digital marketing situation of the company, findings of SWOT-analysis and reflecting those findings to theoretical insight. This chapter begins with the introduction of the reasons why the chosen strategy model was selected after which the digital marketing strategy is presented.

The digital marketing strategy for company X was created by using the generic digital marketing strategy model described in chapter 3.4. The model is slightly adapted from the original by excluding the definition of customer value proposition. All other steps in the model have been considered when creating the strategy.

The reasons why the generic digital marketing strategy model was selected were the segment, target groups and the company. As stated in chapter 3.1 the business-to-business segment is not fast-paced as business-to-consumer which allows long-time (three to five years) strategies and plans. Also, the segment and target groups are already familiar with the commissioning company as a brand because of a long history and the market leader position that the company has in Finland. Though the digital marketing strategy can be more stable and long-term there still need to be flexibility for changes.

The selected model supports the key feature of business-to-business markets well. Creating digital marketing vision that includes taking care of customer relationships and supporting the sales organisation in that task will benefit the company's sales and reputation. The company X's target groups are stable. There have not been major changes within the target groups and focus have always been the same. HVAC designers and installers, distributors and municipalities are the key target groups.

Being a global company, it can take long time before changes, new technologies or new ways of working are implemented and adapted in the commissioning company. Therefore, the generic digital marketing strategy model fits to company X more than for example real-time planning. Another reason to support the selection is the resources of digital marketing in the company. There are not enough marketing specialists to implement agile testing plans, analysing and forming new developments. The strategy therefore must be stable enough to have time for implementation. The digital marketing strategy should be part of

the annual planning cycle in marketing. Then the digital marketing strategy is reviewed annually.

The digital marketing strategy is a result from a clear process with each step considered carefully. The strategy will be presented next after which the digital marketing channel strategy is presented.

5.1 Digital marketing strategy

Company X's digital marketing strategy for business-to-business customers is fully presented in appendix 4. The strategy includes the vision, goals of digital marketing, implementation plan with milestones, segmentation and target groups, the digital marketing channel strategy, the description of hierarchy of the channels as well as the metrics and evaluation of digital marketing strategy.

The vision of digital marketing was formulated to support company X's business vision and the selected segment. The vision also indicates the key feature of business-to-business segment, the customer relationship and continuous work to maintain the existing customer relationships. The features that are important in business-to-marketing marketing.

The goals of digital marketing for the business-to-business customers are providing different information using suitable digital marketing channels, growing sales for the company by helping business-to-business customers to sell, design, install and maintain company X's systems and services to their own customers. The goals for the commissioning company include supporting sales organisation to take care of the customer relationships by using digital marketing tools and technologies.

The implementation has two phases. The first phase is prioritised as imperative in order to proceed the next phase. The first phase of implementation includes updating the content in website to target business-to-business customers. At this step, the search engine optimization needs to be considered to direct customers to company website.

The first step also includes delivering targeted content for business-to-business customers. In order to implement this step, the content strategy for each target group needs to be created and only after that the content can be created and delivered via right channel by the digital channel strategy.

The last two steps in the first implementation phase are relating to email marketing and customer relationship management tool. Creating an email programme for current and upcoming topics from company X for business-to-business customers and promotion campaign to get subscriptions are essential for both delivering information and to maintain the existing customer relationship. In addition, to support the sales to maintain the customer relationship, an automated customer relationship email programme should be created for each sales representative to inform strategically important sales themes and to be in touch with the customer while freeing sales representative's time to more important sales activities.

The digital marketing strategy is created for business-to-business segment. The target groups that this strategy is created for, are wholesalers and retailers (distributors), HVAC and infra designers, HVAC installers, civil engineering contractors, and municipalities and water utilities. The roles of each target group have been introduced in chapter 2.1. and these roles and the needs that role generates, have to be considered when creating content for the target group. It should be noted that not all the target groups are buying customers. For example, the designers do not buy anything from company X, but they play a crucial role in purchase decision making process and requires detailed information about products and systems to support his decision making.

Evaluation of the strategy is planned to before or during the annual marketing planning process. At that time, the direction of digital marketing is good to revise and to remember the strategy and specially the digital channel strategy when creating the next year's digital marketing action plan. The metrics for the strategy are planned to support each implementation step but also to view the coherent digital marketing performance.

5.2 Digital marketing channel strategy

For the digital marketing channel strategy, the model is adapted from the Digital Channel Model by Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann (2015, 123). The idea of the model is to present the digital marketing channels and their role in customer communication. The model shows what kind of information is delivered via which channel and what other digital marketing channel can support the primary digital marketing channel to deliver the message. For example, the product information's primary digital marketing channel is website but the supporting digital marketing channel for the website to deliver the message about the product is the email or newsletters to be send out to business-to-business customers.

As mentioned in chapter 3.4, the digital marketing strategy should be integrated with traditional marketing strategy and the activities should be aligned therefore the supporting traditional channel has been added to the model. The most efficient traditional business-to-business promotion method is sales visit and personal contact hence the sales visit is self-evidently marked as supporting traditional channel to each digital marketing channel. During the sales visit, the sales representative can have a fruitful conversation with customer, presenting information, promoting new products or services and have a feedback discussion.

The communication direction is also mentioned in the digital marketing channel strategy. The communication direction refers to who has directed the communication. The simplex communication means that the communication is one-way from company to the customers. The duplex communication is then two-way communication where customers and the company can have real time discussion using the digital marketing channel. (Straker et al. 2015, 116.) In the commissioning company's digital marketing channel strategy, for example email/newsletters are simplex communication (company X informing the customer) and LinkedIn is seen as duplex communication (company X can have a discussion with the customer in real time in LinkedIn).

The digital marketing channel strategy also includes some examples of what the customer's need is or what the customer is searching for in each digital marketing channel. This helps to understand the role of digital marketing channel better and what type of content the digital marketing channel should include. For example, in Youtube there are content about product information (installation videos and product feature videos) but there is also possibility to have a discussion in the comment section.

Most of the target groups for digital channels are for all business-to-business customer target groups but there are some exceptions. For instance, LinkedIn channel is primary for designers and Youtube channel is targeted to HVAC installers and civil engineering contractors.

Company website is the primary channel for business-to-business customers. The website is providing detailed visitor analytics which provides valuable data for content improvement and customer path creation. The content of the website can also be shared to colleagues or another team member easily by just sending a link to specific page.

All other digital channels have supporting roles. Especially email and LinkedIn are considered the primary supporting channels. Email was selected because the content of it can

be targeted to specific target group for instance, HVAC designers, and because the current CRM system, ClickDimensions, is providing detailed data about the newsletter reader and the topics that he is interested in hence generating potential lead for sales. LinkedIn, instead, is considered to be two-way communication channel where commissioning company can have a dialogue with its business-to-business customers or even influencers. The business-to-business customers can be reached via LinkedIn by providing thought leadership articles that create trust or to promote supporting digital tools for the business-to-business customers.

Other social media channels such as Facebook and Youtube are not considered such important channels. Facebook plays a brand building role for the commissioning company due to fact that targeting only to business-to-business customers is not possible. Youtube is supporting website by being the platform for product-oriented videos such as product feature videos or installation videos.

Strategy implementation and milestones are based on the primary digital channel, website, and the supporting digital channels, emails/newsletters and LinkedIn. These channels are considered the most important channels that need to be improved and set on focus first before going any further to the next phases.

6 Discussion

This thesis studied digital marketing in a commissioning company and digital marketing especially in business-to-business segment. At first, was introduced the goals of the thesis, research problem, research questions, the scope and limitations of the thesis. Then the commissioning company and its current marketing in general was described after which the theory insight of business-to-business marketing begun. Theory insight also covered digital marketing's general definition and deeper insight for business-to-business digital marketing. The theory part concluded with different digital marketing strategy models. The study of current state analysis of commissioning company's digital marketing was presented including the findings of the study and SWOT analysis. The digital marketing strategy being the result of the study was presented the next.

Creation of digital marketing strategy requires realistic analysis and observation from the company about its market, internal resources and capabilities. In addition, it requires studying different strategy model alternatives and then discussion of the suitable model to use in the company. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 160.) The digital marketing strategy in order to be successful, requires objective observation about the digital marketing activities and performance of the commissioning company without any feeling to defend own work and effort done in the past. The findings and analysis of the study are done with objective and genuine willing to improve the performance of digital marketing for the commissioning company. The strategy has been created based on the findings and analysis of the study as well as following the generic digital marketing strategy model with small adjustment.

The answers for the research questions were found from the theory and from the case study. The first research question was what business-to-business marketing is. Chapter 3.1. discussed different features of business-to-business markets by comparing it to business-to-consumer markets before presenting the special features of business-to-business marketing. Research question number two, what is digital marketing in business-to-business segment, was answered in chapter 3.4 presenting the approaches that need to be considered when planning business-to-business digital marketing. Whole chapter four is an answer to research question four, what is the current status of digital marketing in a commissioning company. The findings from the case study of all the digital channels that company uses, brand and customer survey, and the SWOT analysis form the current perception of digital marketing in a commissioning company. The last research question about the best digital marketing channels for supporting the sales organisation to maintain existing customer relationship was answered in chapter 5 where the digital marketing channel strategy is presented. The digital marketing channel strategy is formed based on

the theory input, the findings from the case study and the digital marketing strategy for the commissioning company to support the maintaining the existing customer relationships.

The digital marketing strategy reflects the features of business-to-business market's requirements too. As mentioned in the chapter 3.1, the business-to-business market's focus is on maintaining the customer relationships. The targeted content for business-to-business customers in different digital channels of the commissioning company, the findability of the needed and searched information as well as email/newsletter programme to inform business-to-business customers regularly about current and upcoming topics nurture the customer relationship. It will also help the sales organisation to maintain the customer relationship without the sales representatives spending too much time on creating emails about same subject.

The digital marketing strategy is now a road map how to improve the marketing activities with clear prioritization of the digital channels and their roles within the communication mix. This will have an impact in practise when publishing content for the target groups. The digital channel strategy also helps to prioritize the tasks given, the websites are the primary channel that need to be updated and constantly improving it. Emails/newsletters and LinkedIn following as primary supporting channels. Rest of the channels are considered and focused later. This approach is taken into practice in implementation plan and timeline following the same principles. The content of the website needs to be updated and modified to meet the requirements of business-to-business customers after which the content can be delivered via different digital channels.

The digital marketing strategy is a realistic plan to implement the suggested improvement and with these improvements, the quality of digital marketing in commissioning company will be in next level. The strategy also includes ideas for the next implementation phases such as studying the possibilities of social media within business-to-business segment. The social media channels of commissioning company has not played such a central role in the thesis but there are possibilities to create different roles of the channels such as using Twitter for raising current topics of the business field or taking part of the conversations of the current topics. But this will require internal resources and hence is the further development topic.

Another further development idea is account based marketing that commissioning company already had tried but not succeeding with it. The deeper study of the target groups

and deciding together with the sales organisation the selected target groups for the programme to start with. Creating the overall programme with new and targeted content with digital channel mix and also measurement plan with KPIs are worth to study further.

When reflecting the digital marketing strategy creation process to the models presented in the theory insight, it was an eye opener because many of the digital marketing activities performed earlier has been deployed with an idea of testing but the overall vision has been missing. The analysis and strategy creation now have put all activities, content, target groups and channels together resulting the digital marketing function being clearer and easy to understand and manage.

Digital Marketing Manager from business group B commented the strategy as much needed strategy for the organisation to get the sales and marketing to work together towards same objectives. In addition, it is easier to align the priorities and different tasks within the company. The challenge is the implementation of the strategy that needs to be done well to make sure that each member of the organisation needs to understand and commit to the strategy but it will sure help to build tactical plans with concrete KPIs and execute the digital marketing activities.

For my own learning, this thesis has increased the importance of the strategy even more and how important it is to have the strategy and measurement plan ready before executing any activities. The knowledge of the strategy models presented will be useful in the future when designing and planning digital marketing campaigns. The next learning will be unlearning of using all digital channels whenever there is some content to be delivered. This learning not only concerns the marketing team and marketing specialist but also the whole sales, marketing and offering organisation within the commissioning company. The channels being selected for different content and target groups can be expected to be rather big change where change management skills will be needed.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Digital channel model

Model adapted from Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann 2015, 123

Customer content need	Company provided information	Company provided promotion	Supporting channel	Possible result	Type of interaction
Employee contact	Email FAQ	E-news Website	Email Web enquiry Digital feedback form	-	Functional
Instant employee contact	Online chat	Facebook Twitter Instagram	Facebook Twitter Instagram	-	Functional Social
Company information	Website LinkedIn	Online advertising E-newsletters	FAQ Email	Digital advertisement	Functional Commercial
Purchase process	Website	Facebook Twitter Instagram	Online chat Email Web enquiry FAQ	Online store application	Functional Social
Community discussion (company driven)	Blogs Forums Youtube Application	Youtube Pinterest	Youtube Forums Blogs FAQ	Competitions	Community Corporate
Instant company updates	Website Facebook Twitter Instagram Pinterest	Facebook Twitter Instagram Pinterest	Facebook Twitter	Website application	Functional Social
Shared interest	Pinterest Facebook Twitter	Digital catalogues Digital magazines	Pinterest Facebook Twitter	Website application Online store application	Social Corporate Revenue
Community engagement (customer driven)	Youtube Vimeo	Vimeo Pinterest Digital campaigns Flickr	Blogs Forums FAQ Digital feedback	Competitions E-retailer's application	Social Community Corporate
Trust	LinkedIn Digital media releases Corporate reports	Digital catalogues Digital magazines	Blogs Forums FAQ	Membership Loyalty programs	Community Corporate
Company data/statistics	LinkedIn Digital media releases Corporate reports	Digital catalogues Digital magazines	FAQ Digital feedback	Membership Loyalty programs Digital advertisement	Functional Corporate